ALL THINGS TALENT

HIRING FOR
SKILLS

HOW EFFECTIVE SKILL MAPPING CAN WIN THE TALENT WAR
AND RESOLVE RECRUITMENT WOES

INTERVIEW WITH

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Country Manager India, UKG, on bringing employee experience to blue-collar workers

SPECIAL FEATURE

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Note to the Readers

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, neither the authors nor the publishers can accept liability for errors or omissions.

ALL THINGS TALENT
by Naukri Hiring Suite

This issue contains 76 pages including cover.

From the

CBO'S Desk

Pawan Goyal
Chief Business Officer - naukri.com

The pandemic-led lockdowns uprooted decades of established HR processes in one fell swoop and pushed industries the world over into a vicious cycle of employee turnover, hiring and lay-offs. From the 'Great Resignation' last year, the industry is currently going through a 'Great Reshuffle'.

These trends have spurred HR leaders to overhaul their old ways of hiring and performance management. Earlier, the first thing hiring managers would look for in a resume was experience-level   what role, how many years, which industry, etc.

However, in today's rapidly evolving world, many are now hunting for skills, not experience. Skills and the ability to learn new ones have become more important than static roles. This new reality requires HR leaders to hire for skills—not positions, experience, or degrees.

In addition, even job boards show a growing demand for skills-based hiring in response to the changing business needs. The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated this recruiting trend. This means HR leaders need to rewrite their playbooks.

This is where assessments come to play a significant role. They help in making an informed hiring decision and designing an efficient training module. Our recent acquisition last year in this space, DoSelect, has already registered 10x growth. Besides helping in hiring the right talent, they also provide an excellent employee and candidate experience.

Employers have turned to data-driven assessments in order to get the information they need on a candidate's attitudes, skills, and tendency to leave. Assessment can create a virtuous cycle. Data can help provide valuable insights and a comprehensive picture of what makes a candidate worth hiring and training.

In a nutshell, companies will need to rethink their technology investments, make assessment tests a vital part of the recruitment process, and most importantly, conduct a periodic skills assessment test for existing employees to identify internal skills gaps and devise a better career trajectory for them and business growth for the company.

To get a broader understanding of how the assessment tools can streamline the recruitment process at organisations, this edition features interviews with Mayank Kumar (Co-founder & MD, upGrad), who talks about how the AI-driven assessments are changing the hiring process and Rohini Singh (CPO, Fractal) on how they are utilising their training academy to equip talent.

Apart from them, we have also connected with Ritika Mathur (Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP), Pete Hamilton (VP & MD, KellyOCG), Vishwanadh Raju (Head of Talent Acquisition—India, Dun & Bradstreet), and Ritesh Malhotra (Business Head, Enterprise at Great Learning) to learn more about the growth of the sector.

In addition, this edition also has a few special stories on assessment tools, skills inventory, upskilling and several other topics for anyone who wants to learn more about it.

Happy Reading!

Write to us

✉ naukrihiringsuite@naukri.com

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Deutsche Bahn India ropes in Muukesh Gupta as Head- Human Resources

Muukesh Gupta has been named the new head of Human Resources for Deutsche Bahn India, a division of Deutsche Bahn AG. Prior to this, he was the Head of Human Resource at CRRC India Private Limited. In his new role, Gupta will oversee the HR department in India and headline the execution of the first RRTS Project mainly focusing on the scale-up of the talent pool.

Airtel Payments Bank Names Shilpi Kapoor as CMO

Shilpi Kapoor has been named Chief Marketing Officer by Airtel Payments Bank. She will be in charge of corporate communication function and marketing for the bank. Previously, Kapoor was with American Express as Director of Marketing. In her new role, she will be part of the bank's executive committee and will be working closely with MD and CEO, Anubrata Biswas.

KPIT hires Shashwat Mitra as Head of HR, India

KPIT, the automotive software giant has announced the appointment of Shashwat K. Mitra as Head- HR, India. In his new position, he will work on significant strategic projects that will improve KPIT's capacity to attract, retain, and develop talent. An alumnus of XLRI Jamshedpur, he comes with nearly 17 years of experience. Before joining KPIT, Mitra was Director of Human Resources at digital transformation services company AppDirect.

boAt onboards Charmie Awasthi as Chief Human Resources Officer

Imagine Marketing, the parent company of boAt, the Indian wireless hearables brand, has announced the appointment of Charmie Awasthi as Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). Awasthi brings with her a rich professional experience of over 17 years with media conglomerates like Viacom 18 and Zee Entertainment. Prior to this, she was associated with VOOT as AVP – Human Resources Business HR Head – National Entertainment & Digital Ventures.

Granules India appoints ex Ashok Leyland VP as Chief HR Officer

Uma Rao has been appointed by Granules India, a fully integrated pharmaceutical manufacturer as its new CHRO. Previously, she was associated with Ashok Leyland as Vice President of HR for 7 years. She is a senior HR leader with experience in a wide gamut of HR areas over 3 decades in multiple sectors like Petroleum, IT, Telecom, FMCG, Manufacturing, and in leading MNCs and Indian Companies.

Netflix appoints former Dentsu CHRO as Head of Talent, India

Netflix has named Rohit Suri as the organisation's new head of talent. Before joining Netflix, he was Dentsu International's Chief Human Resources Officer for South Asia. An alumnus of Symbiosis Institute of Business Management (SIBM), he comes with 23 years of experience in fast-paced Consumer Internet, Technology, and Media companies. Suri has been associated with Star India, Turner, Paytm, Shaadi.com, Group M, and others.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT IS A PREREQUISITE FOR QUALITY HIRE

A pre-employment assessment improves the match quality of hired employees by profiling a person's skills, values, personality, and competency.

When hiring for new roles in your organisation, resumes, and interviews only tell you so much. Appealing CVs and impressive educational credentials all convey information about a person's knowledge and accomplishments. However, there are many other factors to consider when you're making a hiring decision. For example: does the candidate have the skills required to perform work to a high standard? This is a vital question and to get the most accurate and reliable answers, you'll need to go beyond basic recruitment methods like reviewing resumes, holding

The secret to my success is that we've gone to exceptional lengths to hire the best people in the world.
–Steve Jobs

job interviews, and verifying references. Conducting a skills assessment is a surefire way to assess a person's proficiency and competency. Skill assessments help HR scour through an ocean of applicants and get the applications down from a thousand to ten.

What are pre-employment tests?

A pre-employment test is a standardised way of collecting information on candidates during the recruiting process. The purpose of these types of tests is to offer an efficient and accurate means to learn about a prospective candidate's abilities and personality traits. These tests reduce time to hire, ensure employers hire competent candidates, and minimise the time and money spent training new hires.

For example, job knowledge tests assess a candidate's technical or theoretical competence in a particular subject; personality tests can reveal how well individuals fit into a company's culture and whether their personality can translate into job success; a cognitive ability test measures a candidate s critical thinking,

problem-solving and ability to learn new things; skills assessment tests measure a candidate's soft or hard skills; emotional intelligence tests assess empathy and self-awareness in a person; integrity tests measure a candidate's honesty and reliability, and physical ability tests are used to determine a candidate's strength and endurance.

Industry Overview

Pre-employment testing and applicant assessments have been around for a long time, so why is it that everyone is suddenly trying to incorporate them into their hiring process?

As per a Financial Express article, India produces the third-highest number of graduates in the world, however, many surveys show that less than 25 percent of Indian graduates are employable by global standards. The report further states that 81 percent of engineers and 95 percent of graduates from other fields are considered unfit for employment.

This is why around 80 percent of companies, big or small, have begun to use recruiting assessments to weed through the enormous pool of job applicants and place people in roles that are best suited to them (survey from indiaemployerforum).

As per Business Research Insights, the Global Assessment Services market size is estimated to grow at a CAGR of almost 9.4 percent from $19.5 billion to $36.41 billion during the forecast period 2022-2027.

In India, the assessment services market was expected to cross $750 million by 2021 according to TechSci Research s report covering 2016 - 2021

Covid-19 Impact Analysis

There is no doubt that the candidate skills assessment market has grown significantly in recent years, but due to Covid-19, demand for candidate skills assessment technology is rising, coupled with a rise in demand for skilled employees. This is due to three reasons:

The changing nature of work and shift to work from home/

hybrid model due to Covid-19 has quickly and dramatically led to an unprecedented surge in demand for new skills and abilities; and radically changed the way businesses function around the world, including their recruitment strategies and processes.

There is a growing demand for efficiency and transparency in the hiring process. According to Glassdoor, 96 percent of applicants believe that working for an organisation that values openness is crucial. Younger applicants are more picky about workplace culture.

Technological advancements in pre-employment assessment

services are making life easier for candidates and boosting the ability of human resources departments to determine whether an applicant is a right fit or not.

According to a survey from MeritTrac and Behavioural Economics and Science Team (BEAST), 86 percent of organisations moved hiring and assessment online during the pandemic and 30 percent had no technology infrastructure in place for online hiring or assessment.

Therefore, organisations are pulling out all the stops to source the best talent and searching for solutions that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their recruitment

LIST OF THE TOP KEY PLAYERS OF
ASSESSMENT SERVICES MARKET

Source: Digital Journal, Reports

process while providing a positive candidate experience. As a result, companies are increasingly using pre-hire assessments   such as work samples, cognitive ability tests, and personality, values and competencies tests that the job role, company culture, etc demands   to identify the best candidate which is driving a greater assessment tool adoption than we ve ever seen before.

Key Market Players

More and more organisations are turning to analytics to guide their hiring decisions which will only increase the use of assessments in various industries and businesses. With the emergence of new-age technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, gamification, automation, social media, big data analytics, and crowdsourcing, assessments make hiring less prone to prejudice, increase gender and racial diversity, and diminish human error.

According to a University of Toronto Study, employees employed based on algorithmic suggestions had 15 percent longer work tenures than those hired without testing.

The companies providing corporate assessment solutions are promptly gaining traction due to digital disruption, the growing inclination for virtual exams and remote proctoring, the growing need for skill assessment for improving employability, and the rising population of the young labour force in the country.

Bengaluru-based HR technology startup DoSelect was bought by Info Edge, the parent company of recruitment portal Naukri.com in 2021. The company provides a comprehensive offering, right from sourcing, targeting relevant applications for various jobs to measuring and mapping skills across the employment life cycle - all powered by machine learning.

Some other players operating in the India assessment services market are MeritTrac Services Pvt. Ltd., Mettl Online Assessment, Aspiring Minds, Sify Technologies Limited, CoCubes Technologies Pvt. Ltd., eLitmus Evaluation Pvt. Ltd., Tata Consultancy Services Limited, EdCIL (India) Limited, Prometric Testing Pvt Ltd, and Pearson India Education Services Pvt. Ltd., among others. For example, Co-Cubes

conducts assessments in a variety of domains ranging from programming to plumbing, Mettl provides assessment tools, proctoring, and online assessment software to corporate clients for hiring and training and development, and Naukri serves as a first-level filtering tool, letting you screen much more talent, in much less time and cost.

Benefits of Assessments for Talent Development

Skills assessments should be used for more than simply pre-employment purposes. Strategic planning is critical to the success of any organisation and by continuously assessing the skills and competencies of current employees, HR will have a better
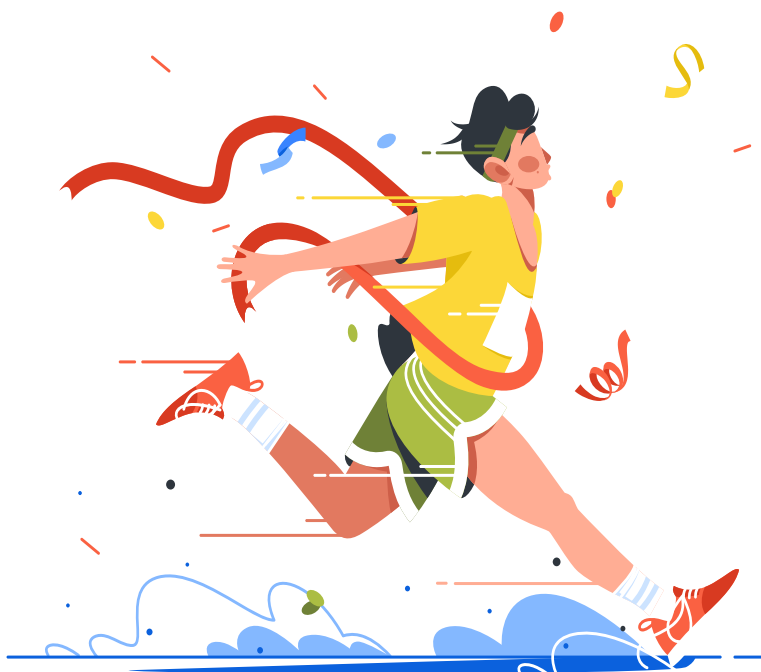
understanding of the skills that are needed from new joinees.

A skills inventory is a list of the skills and work experience of current employees. HR can use these inventories to understand if the current workforce skills are sufficient to meet their company goals and where the skills gaps exist. As many as 375 million people (about 14 percent of the global workforce) may be affected by 2030 because of digital transformation, automation, and advancements in artificial intelligence (2018 McKinsey Global Institute report). Skill assessment, when used properly, can add to an organisation s learning and improvement program.

Conclusion

Well-thought-out talent assessments can help employers onboard employees quickly, easily, ethically, and without making costly recruitment mistakes. Keeping pace in a rapidly changing work environment requires employers to quickly identify the right skills and the people who possess them. This can only be done with systems that can predict, understand, and match thousands of people to a job and offer real-time solutions, such as automated short-listing of high-potential candidates and discarding the unqualified ones.

As someone wisely said, high-performing organisations are founded on the quality of their employees.

THE MAIN BENEFITS OF
PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Higher productivity

Increased employee retention

More efficient, less time consuming

Saves a lot of money

Minimises human bias

More precise results

90% of Fortune **500** companies have found that assessments predict new-hire success and retention.

A scientific pre-hire assessment can reduce employee turnover by over **50%**

Source: CMA Case Study on Retention

40% of employees who don't receive job training designed to help them do well in their positions will leave within the first year.

70% of respondents indicated that job-related training and development opportunities influenced their decision to stay in their jobs.

Source: ShiftLearning

AT FRACTAL, TALENT ACQUISITION IS ABOUT OFFERING UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITIONS

ROHINI SINGH

CPO, Fractal

Rohini Singh is the Chief People Officer at Fractal with over 16 years of multi-functional experience. She has worked across a range of industries such as Consulting Services, Aviation, Manufacturing & Retail. Key skills include leading cultural transformation, change management, talent acquisition, and talent management. Rohini joined Fractal to set up the Global Talent Acquisition Capability and lead Special Initiatives. Previously, she worked at Jet Airways, Essar Group, and Amrop International.

In an exclusive interview, Rohini Singh, CPO, Fractal talks about the company s journey in the Indian market, key focus areas, and future growth plans.

Q. Since starting out two decades back, how would you explain the growth of the company from a talent viewpoint?

We have grown organically and consistently through the last 22 years. And, it s been quite a journey where there have been a lot of learnings. Today, we re close to about 4,100 people roughly, and this is our global number. We re spread across multiple locations across the world. The largest portion of this workforce is based in India. Out of the total 4,100 employees, 3,500 individuals are based in India, with the other workers being spread out across the US, UK, and Europe.

Additionally, we are opening offices in Australia. Australia is, therefore, one of the newer markets where we re looking to make investments. We don't have many employees there, but we already employed close to 30 people as we re looking to expand into that market. There would be 82 of us in Ukraine. Of course, given the current circumstances and the ongoing crisis in the region, we are unsure how things will unfold.

> *One thing we've done recently is to move away from many of the smaller, organic systems that had been in place for years and switched to one integrated holistic HRIS and that is a big move for us because that meant letting go of systems that we have been used to for many years. The first move is for you to be able to create this tech architecture, which is holistic, integrated, scalable, and also integrates very well with all the other existing systems in the organisation.*

Q. How was your employee growth in the last two years? How was the demand from global markets?

We experienced very high demand in a high-growth market. Near the end of 2020, demand unexpectedly increased for us, and we continued to see high client demand (existing and new). Demand is mostly from global markets. And, we operate across different sectors like consumer packaged goods (CPG), healthcare, financial services, insurance, and retail. Of course, the CPG industry remains one of our primary focuses, but we also have a number of other sizable clients in other industries. We experienced consistent and steady growth across most of our business lines.

Q. As digital adoption increased across the board, how did that reflect on you in business and employee growth?

Before Covid hit, there were about 1,500 people. And today, there are more than 4,000 of us. We've witnessed very dramatic growth within the company over the last 2 years. And, we have, of course,

been hiring quite aggressively. Especially in the last fiscal year, we hired a lot of people. We have also, like many other organisations like ourselves, been struggling with the great resignation. We re not far away from the market in terms of our overall numbers. However, we are not satisfied with the statistics in absolute terms. We would have loved to see those numbers in the low 10s.

So, given the market conditions, the great resignation, and our massive growth plans, our hiring engines had to scale rapidly. As a result, we have grown significantly during the past two years. Of the 4,100 people, I would say, at least 65-70 percent are new joinees who joined us in the last 2 years.

We have developed and implemented a strong talent acquisition plan. During the years, we've improved it. Over the past two years, we've added a lot of fresh, intriguing components to it. Therefore, we are confident we can meet the organisation's demand for talent.

Q: About two-third of employees joined in the last 2 years. How did you integrate them?

As the talent landscape has shifted so has the cultural fabric of the organisation. We believe that in the long run, culture is our strategy and it is going to be our biggest differentiator. And therefore, we plan to make significant investments in this space and have already started doing so.

Q: With multi-fold growth in the employee base, how did your talent strategy evolve?

I won t say that we were entirely prepared, but we have been thinking and building our muscle in talent acquisition over the last 3-4 years, and we have been making investments and building our strategy in terms of how we will be able to win or have a significant edge in this war for talent. If we continue to rely on conventional methods of hiring talent, such as going out and hiring somebody laterally into a job role where you require a person X with a certain set of skills, we don't think we'll have an edge over others.

Given the demand, supply, and talent shrinkage that we re seeing in the market today, and which is likely going to continue in the future, we feel that we need to take a very different approach towards talent acquisition. So, our

strategy for talent acquisition is quite simple. First, we believe that most of our talent should come in largely from campus hiring. Second, we think that hiring high-quality talent into the system and making significant investments in their learning, development, and upskilling will allow us to grow that talent over time within the organisation.

Q: Analytics as an area of expertise has its own challenges in identifying quality talent. How are you identifying relevant talent?

We are moving away from the traditional hiring process of searching for the Pink Unicorn talent (candidates with perfect qualifications but passive) and going closer to becoming net creators of talent. Over 4.5 million

individuals are employed in the IT-BPM sector today. There are many people that want to transition into analytics consulting. They may be interested in data sciences work or data engineering work. But, can we create that bridge where we re able to offer a career change? The value proposition is that we re looking for people who have that potential and that learnability. We will train them because most skills in our industry are trainable. There are very few skills in the market today that Fractal cannot train on. Our strategy is to hire candidates with potential, learnability, and skills that can be developed through training. After that, we will open up the aperture for them internally within the organisation in terms of choices of different career tracks. As a result, they will have the freedom to be able to choose their career path and be able to grow and also move across the organisation.

At Fractal, talent acquisition is not just about hiring, it s also about unique value propositions once you join us. So, our value proposition is deep investments in learning, upskilling, and freedom to be able to design your career even after joining Fractal.

Q: How do skilling for different roles take place?

We have a training academy called The Fractal Analytics Academy (FAR), which offers access to a library and other multiple resources that allow people to upskill themselves.

Therefore, from a talent acquisition viewpoint, the entire ecosystem of training, investment in learning & development, plus unlocking the internal talent marketplace, has really worked for us. And, have we perfected it? Not entirely but we re getting better with each passing cycle.

Q: How does assessment play a role in your lateral hires?

One important factor to consider is - hiring for potential and training for skills. The other is hiring for culture fit. We look for people who are humble, hungry, and smart. And we think the only way to be a good team player is to have all three of these qualities. Our HHS model allows us to determine who is most likely to succeed at Fractal, and all of our interviewers have received training in this area. At Fractal, we take that very seriously. Because, for us, it s about taking the long-term view on talent. Therefore, a candidate s ability to learn new things, try new roles, and thrive in our culture will determine whether the person is the right fit.

Q: How do you make your decision on fresh hires and how has it grown?

We have increased the scope of our campus program during the past year. Earlier, we used to hire in smaller numbers. We would hire anywhere between 30 to 50; there

wasn t really a structured program around it.

When we first started visiting colleges in 2019, we had a more organised approach to campus hiring. As a result, we have a 3-year structured program which we call the Imagineer program, where we visit all leading engineering institutes across India, and some specific master's programs as well. This year, we would have rolled out offers to roughly 280 300 Imagineers. We anticipate welcoming roughly 250 or so Imagineers in the upcoming fiscal year. It is organised, carefully thought out program, and learning is ongoing process. This is part of the 3-year plan.

Q: Across fresh and lateral hires, how does assessment play a role?

Our assessment gates are very important because they serve as a filter. Our top of the funnel has been expanding rapidly and consistently over the past 12 months. Just 2 years back, our top of the funnel had 250,000 applicants, today we re at 450,000, and it s projected to reach 500,000 in the coming month. As a result, there is a lot of interest in working at Fractal, as well as a lot of brand engagement and participation. Our requirement is only to hire 2,000 workers. Our assessment gates need to be really powerful in order for people to be able to go through all of this.

Q: What are these assessments and what do you check in a candidate?

We have a bunch of tests. We look for aptitude and learnability, but when we are hiring laterally we do a test for basic proficiency across certain skills. If we are hiring data sciences or big data engineers, we have technical assessments before we have interviews, which are very detailed and consist of at least three rounds across all grades. There is a reason why we structured it like that because each interview is addressing a different facet. It is a fairly stringent process. Someone would have had to pass at least two exams, followed by touchpoint assessments or interviews and possibly a case study to get to the offer stage.

Q: Does assessment merely help with elimination alone? How does it help in skilling, branding, and retention?

I think that assessment should not be used only for elimination. This is such a rich data source. While campus hiring, we administer a coding test, but we don't use it to eliminate candidates. Instead, we use it as an input. At the time of interviewing, the results are available to the interviewer. It acts as a window through which the interviewer can get greater insights into the individual.

We plan to integrate them not only into things like employer branding and skill taxonomy but also into learning and development, developing something akin to a skills playbook for Fractalites.

Q. How much money have you spent, specifically on training, and digitising your HR stack over the past two years?

We started thinking about investing in learning, developing learning paths for people, recruiting for potential, and training for skills back in 2015. It is not triggered by Covid. We had to amplify and scale it very rapidly in the last two years.

One thing we've done recently is to move away from many of the smaller, organic systems that had been in place for years and switched to one integrated holistic HRIS and that is a big move for us because that meant letting go of systems that we have been used to for many years. The first move is for you to be able to create this tech architecture, which is holistic, integrated, scalable, and also integrates very well with all the other existing systems in the organisation. We now intend to begin layering and adding more advanced analytics-related AI tools, AI engines, and accelerators on top of it.

AI investment around technology is largely going to be in the area of hiring and talent acquisition.

We receive between 450,000 500,000 applications and screening is the process of reducing that number to 50,000 or 75,000. So, if we can get better through AI in that part of the funnel, I feel like we may get the right 75,000 down the funnel. So, areas, where we believe we should make more investments in the space of AI, will be in hiring, largely around assessments and selection, and the other one would be around employees.

Q: What new skills are in demand for the company? Undoubtedly, there was a greater demand for some skill sets, for instance, cloud engineering. What percentage of your hiring would be for cloud engineering skills?

I don't have the exact number. However, I would estimate that only cloud engineers would make up close to roughly 25 to 30 percent. One or two years back, it would have been around 10 percent of our overall hiring. And this is just cloud, we have other roles as well. We have our full-stack engineers. Demand for engineers has increased dramatically overall. Therefore, the need for engineers as a whole now would account for 45 to 50 percent of our total hiring.

HOW DOSELECT HELPED FRACTAL IN ASSESSING ITS CANDIDATES?

DoSelect is one of the many partners that we work with in assessments. DoSelect has helped us immensely because it is a standardised assessment tool. We use DoSelect extensively for technical assessments. And for specific career tracks, we have a battery of tests which are available on DoSelect, which we use for external hiring. We also use DoSelect for hiring internal talent. Therefore, there are also internal applications for it.

Whenever we are running any internal assessments or simulations, a lot of that is done on the DoSelect platform for us internally. Like I said earlier, I feel that assessments today tend to be a little myopic. They are siloed. If we are testing candidates, our understanding of who is likely to be successful in a role or an organisation goes well beyond their ability to code and ace an IQ test. It is about behaviours, emotional intelligence, how they are likely to respond in a given situation, and their ability to manage multiple or different kinds of stakeholders, and all of this evolves across different careers. Therefore, my aptitude as a designer will be considerably different from my aptitude as a data engineer, human capital specialist, or any other professional.

Disclaimer: DoSelect is owned by Info Edge (India) Ltd, which also owns AllThingsTalent.org

📷 SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Fractal Analytics Pvt Ltd, Mumbai
Year of Incorporation:	2000
Number of Employees:	About 4100
Founders:	Srikanth Velamakanni, Co-Founder, Group Chief Executive & Vice Chairman & Pranay Agrawal, Co-founder and CEO, Fractal
Key Executives:	Ashwath Bhat – Chief Financial Officer; Satish Raman – Chief Strategy Officer; Rohini Singh – Chief People Officer; Pavan Palety – Chief Growth Officer; Somya Agrawal – Head of Legal; Manish Tiwari – Chief Information Officer
Business Line:	Fractal is one of the most prominent players in the Artificial Intelligence space. Fractal's mission is to power every human decision in the enterprise.
Hiring Pipeline:	We plan to add another 1000 employees in the next one year
Key Investors:	TPG & APAX Partners

RE-INTRODUCE ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR HIGH-VOLUME OF APPLICANTS: KELLYOCG'S PETE HAMILTON

90% Applicant Drop Out Due To Assessment Tests; KellyOCG's Pete Hamilton Suggests How To Curb That

PETE HAMILTON

Vice President and Managing Director, KellyOCG

With over 20 years of experience as a practitioner in the field, Pete is equipped with practical, applicable, and real-world knowledge that enables him to advise clients on how to align their talent strategy with their business strategy. He sets the strategy and leads a talented team to execute KellyOCG s growth plans in APAC and has delivered exceptional financial results.

A significant number of candidates dropout at every stage of the recruiting process, especially before taking an assessment test. Let us understand why.

Globally, the pandemic era phenomenon known as the Great Resignation shows no signs of slowing down with senior executives planning to leave their organisations in the next two years, according to a recent report released by KellyOCG, the outsourcing and consulting business of Kelly®. The 2022 KellyOCG Global Workforce Report Re: work uncovers the disconnect between evolving employee expectations and the support firms provide.

To better retain talent after they join the organisation, in India, almost all our clients use either personality or technical assessment tools as part of their hiring processes. The industries where we see these assessment tools used often are technology, finance, and BPOs. There are numerous assessment tools to evaluate candidates such as:

- Mettl they customise assessment tools according to the clients needs

- Coding assessment tools: Hackerank, Codility

- Voice accent and communication skills assessment tools

- Psychometric assessment tools for mid to senior-level

hiring: Thomas International, Saville

The assessment tools primarily help to narrow down the pool of candidates to those who are a better fit for the role or the organisation, thus reducing the number of interview rounds and shortening the hiring timeline. Having a diverse and inclusive hiring process can open up more

> *Assessment platforms help find better fit candidates when there is a high volume of applicants or when companies would like to get a better understanding of the profile or personality of the candidates. However, the assessment tools do not directly address the talent crunch issue in the market.*

talent channels that organisations could be missing for the workforce skills that they need. Thus, it is important for employers to have a proactive plan to promote, attract, and engage talent from a diverse pool of candidates.

There are many leadership tools in the market used to assess employees leadership skills. These assessment tools provide additional perspectives besides work performance and co-workers feedback of the employee. In addition, organisations can consider assigning such talent with projects to better assess the necessary skills the organisations are looking for in their future leaders.

In India, the most common assessment tool used is Mettl as it customises the assessments based on the needs of the clients, whether it is a functional skills assessment or a personality assessment. For coding skills assessment, Hackerank is commonly used by our clients.

For junior positions, the assessment is meted out to candidates before the first interview to filter out the candidates with the right skills and capabilities as required by the role. On average, minimally 20-25 percent of the candidates are filtered out after the assessment.

For middle to senior management positions, personality assessment tools are usually administered after the first interview or later in the interview process. The main objective of the assessment is to know the candidates personality, leadership skills, and work styles to better identify where the candidate would be a good fit in the organisation.

The Covid-19 impact

Before the pandemic, 100 percent of our clients administered assessment tests for junior roles. Currently, only 20 percent of our clients have an assessment test in place for junior IT and recruiter roles due to the talent crunch for these two roles. It has been observed that the candidates drop out of the hiring process at a higher rate when they know there will be an assessment test. So companies are now focused on getting candidates to fill the roles rather than getting the right fit for the organisation.

In the current market situation, KellyOCG's clients have less than 5 percent of open positions which employ assessments before the first interview round to filter out the candidates on the basis of their coding expertise. For these roles, we are submitting close to 700 profiles (20 profiles per position) on a daily basis but only 10-12 percent of candidates take the assessment test. The rest of them i.e. around 90 percent drop out even after confirming their attendance for the test. The reason is, they have other interviews lined up which don t mandate an assessment test.

As for personality assessment tests, about 40 percent of our clients use them in hiring. Generally, we see that candidates do not mind going through personality assessment tests as organisations will be sharing the findings with them. The candidates themselves would like to have a deeper understanding of their personality profiling.

As mentioned, talent for IT and recruiter roles are in short supply. This is partly due to Covid as many business transactions and work processes have digitalised resulting in huge demand for various IT roles. And when companies have a huge demand for those roles and are unable to hire, there is a strong demand for recruiters to help with the hiring challenges companies face, particularly post-pandemic as hiring demands ramp up again.

Assessment platforms help find better fit candidates when there is a high volume of applicants or when companies would like to get a better understanding of the profile or personality of the candidates. However, the assessment tools do not directly address the talent crunch issue in the market.

Presently, companies are most eager to hire candidates with IT experience, such as those with coding experience, hardware or software skills, etc.

What can one do to improve these assessment tests?

1. Make it competitive for candidates:

We still need to highlight the importance of these assessments

for roles that are not subject to the current talent crunch — in fact for as many roles as possible as this will create awareness, competitiveness, and readiness among candidates.

We should also try to reintroduce the assessments for high-volume roles, but at least after the first interview so that they are not seen as an elimination tool. The assessment scores should be shared with the candidates to get a sense of their ability level, which will help them upskill as their career progresses.

2. Present bench strength of key industries:

Only services companies have managed to keep a bench strength of about 10-15 percent in the past, and other organisations create this bench with fresh campus hires to create a talent pool. Keeping a bench may help the organisations to some extent. However, working in collaboration with colleges before hiring them and creating that bench assessment and training resources will help us to stay ahead with these skill gaps.

SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	KELLY OUTSOURCING & CONSULTING GROUP INDIA PVT. LTD, Gurugram-122002
Year of Incorporation:	Kelly India — 2001
Number of Employees:	As of May 2022 — 245 FTEs
Founder:	William Russel Kelly
Business Line:	Business Line: KellyOCG is the leading advisor of talent supply chain strategies and workforce solutions
Hiring Pipeline:	Average of 25 resources joining us every month
Workforce Pie (in %):	Workforce Pie (in %): Operation- 77%, Global Resources — 18%, Support — 4%, Sales 1%,
Key HR Factor:	65% women employees, HRMS tool, No ESOPs, Employee benefits – R&R programs, Wellness, 24/7, free EAP services provided for all employees

Workforce Pie (in %):

- Global Resources
- Operation
- Support
- Sales

SPECIAL FEATURE
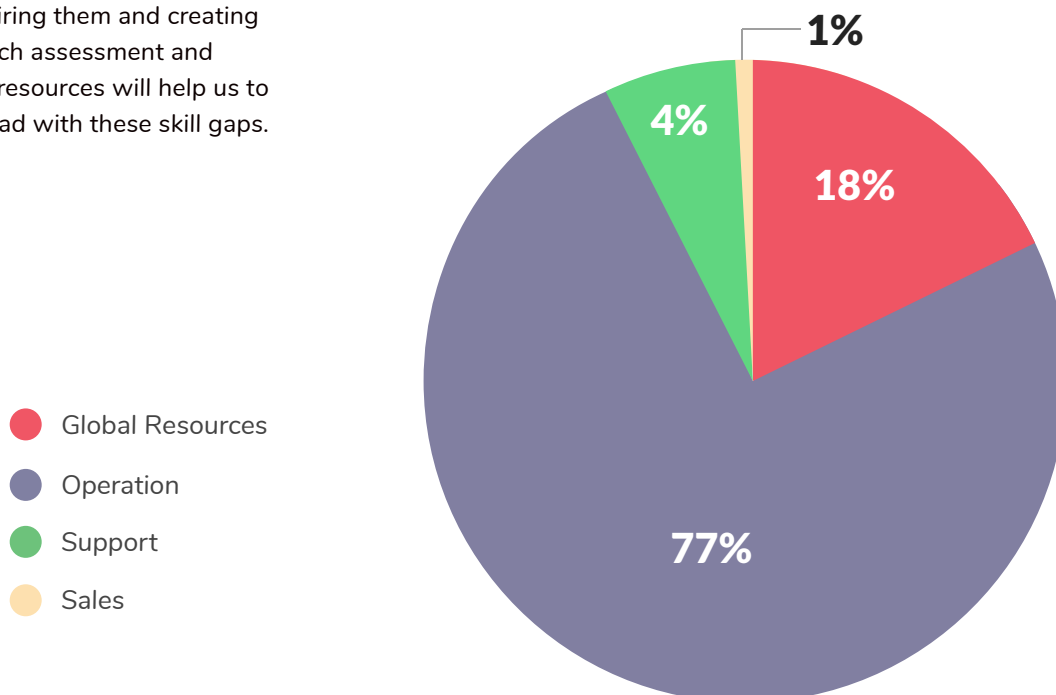
HOW SKILLS INVENTORY CREATED THROUGH ASSESSMENT TOOLS CAN HELP WIN THE 'BUILD VS BUY TALENT' ARGUMENT

A skills inventory based on a comprehensive assessment tool can help understand future skills and how to develop them internally and tackle business challenges head-on.

The digital revolution has overhauled how a human resources manager functions. Modern HR managers now have several digital tools across hiring, managing talent, and payroll processing at their disposal. These digital tools, in turn, have optimised tedious, error-prone, and costly time-consuming tasks, to be completed at a click of a button.

However, in this ever-expanding suite of tech tools, the one thing that remains elusive is the accuracy or precision in getting that hard-to-find and high-quality tech talent in a short span. Say, once a candidate is identified, it's still only half the battle won. It is because the recruitment process is usually too slow and lacks the bandwidth to effectively screen the candidate with the level of domain expertise demanded by the operating team.

How slow? A typical hiring process takes 36 days - where screening and conducting interviews alone takes 15 days. On the supply side, about 250 resumes are submitted for each job posting where four to six candidates will get an interview.

It is no wonder that as many as 70 percent of companies expressed an intention to increase their CSR spending in education and skilling in this fiscal. Another study last March revealed that 81 percent of Indian companies maintain skills inventories   far more than any other region.

It is here that an assessment tool, still in its nascent stage in terms of the adoption rate, plays an important role in a variety of decision-making, particularly in the area of hiring new talent and screening existing talent to create a skills inventory. Rightly so, a skills inventory developed based on a comprehensive assessment tool can help tackle business challenges head-on.

A cursory reading of an assessment player shows that an effective inventory can be created over several programming languages, frameworks, AI, Machine Learning, Data Science, and so on. Robust skills inventory further documents a compilation of the skills, education, and experiences of its existing employees. On the non-tech side, there are assessment tools for psychometric and aptitude tests. In fact, some of these tools can cherry-pick future leaders with the ability to make critical decisions with strong interpersonal skills.

In addition, a skills database of the potential candidates through a formal system ought to give a long horizon advantage to the company. Skill assessments also help HR scour through an ocean of applicants and get the applications down from a thousand to ten.

Screening In, Not Screening Out

Pre-employment testing and applicant assessments have been around for a long time, so why is there growing popularity to incorporate these tools into the hiring process? The changing nature of work and shift to work from the home/hybrid model due to Covid-19 has quickly and dramatically led to an unprecedented surge in demand for new skills and abilities; and radically changed the way businesses function around the world, including their recruitment strategies and processes.

In fact, experts believe that a typical recruitment practice of screening out   or eliminating candidates because they don't meet all criteria   is not workable in the present environment. The talent acquisition team should practice more "screening in,"

IN A NUTSHELL, SKILL ASSESSMENT CAN HELP THE HR IN TWO MAJOR ASPECTS

HIRE RIGHT & HIRE FAST

ReSkill, upskill, DEPLOY - FASTER & BETTER
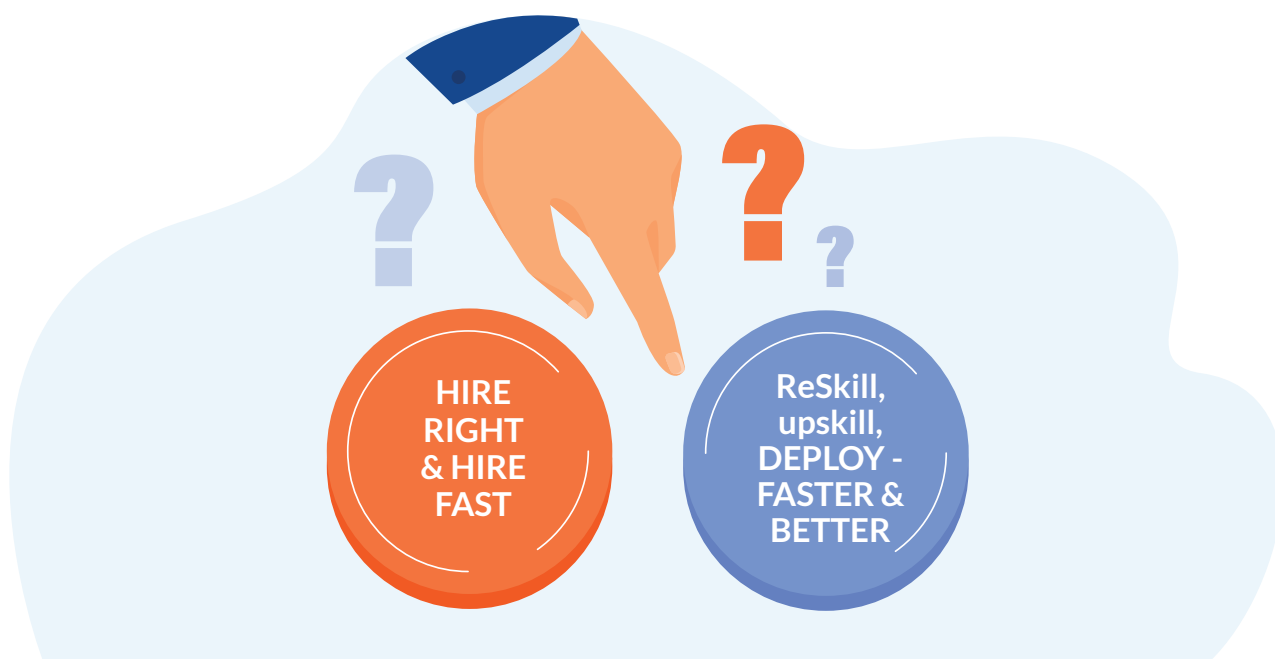
or hiring for competencies and training on the particular role, they add.

The problem is many companies lack the infrastructure and understanding of the importance of these tech tools and a few still rely on archaic paper-based assessments on campuses and walk-ins. That seems to be changing. According to a survey from MeritTrac and Behavioural Economics and Science Team (BEAST), 86 percent of organisations moved hiring and assessment online during the pandemic and 30 percent had no technology infrastructure in place for online hiring or assessment.

A happy, yet slow start is that companies are increasingly using pre-hire assessments   such as work samples, cognitive ability tests, and personality, values and

> *In fact, experts believe that a typical recruitment practice of screening out   or eliminating candidates because they don't meet all criteria   is not workable in the present environment. The talent acquisition team should practice more "screening in," or hiring for competencies and training on the particular role, they add.*

competencies test that the job role, company culture, etc demands   to identify the best candidate which is driving a greater assessment tool adoption than we ve ever seen before.

As a result, employees employed based on algorithmic suggestions had 15 percent longer work tenures than those hired without testing, according to a University of Toronto Study.

In addition, the practice of filtering down the funnel through a process of elimination also leads to a bad candidate experience. To address this issue, a platform like DoSelect boasts of a library of questions spread across multiple languages, roles, skillset, and tech frameworks to hire right and fast. The evaluation engine performs a deep skill quality analysis to help refine the company s candidate list, with the skill insights that are critical to a job function.

Such tools help the company in hiring the right talent fast and with precision. Besides, the level of automation involved in these tools can create a positive candidate experience by triggering messages after a candidate completes an assessment on whether the company will contact them because they fit the role or thank them for their time and nudge them to apply for other roles in the company that are more suitable to their skillset.

More and more organisations are turning to analytics to guide their entire employment lifecycle which will only increase the use of

assessments in various industries and businesses.

In a December 2021 interaction with AllThingsTalent, M. Lakshmanan, Chief Human Resources Officer, LTTS said, We believe in investing in talent, developing talent, and building talent from within. We would like to take the option of buying talent from the market only when it is absolutely necessary. If we are venturing into a new business or new line of technologies where we don t have that skill or expertise, then we look for talent in the market. But otherwise, we believe in building talent rather than buying it.

Several larger companies have effectively aced on how to build the talent needs through training and L&D policies.

First, it is more economical. Second, internal talent understands the culture of the

> *Not just in hiring, assessments play a critical role in making talent decisions from whiteboard to a role-based simulation throughout the entire employment lifecycle of the candidate. They play a role in onboarding, upskilling, reskilling, deployment, internal mobility, certifications, and more. When it comes to skills, assessment is the way forward.*

company and how things get done better in the organisation.

To conclude, well-thought-out talent assessments can help employers onboard employees quickly, easily, ethically, and without making costly recruitment mistakes. New-age technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, gamification, automation, social media, big data analytics, and crowdsourcing, assessments make hiring less prone to prejudice, increase gender and racial diversity, and diminish human error.

Keeping pace in a rapidly changing work environment requires employers to quickly identify the right skills and the people who possess them. This can only be done with systems that can predict, understand, and match thousands of people to a job and offer real-time solutions, such as automated short-listing of high-potential candidates and discarding the unqualified ones.

SPECIAL FEATURE

UPGRAD IS PERSONALISING LIFELONG LEARNING AND OFFERING FREE COURSES TO ITS EMPLOYEES

MAYANK KUMAR

Co-founder and MD, upGrad

Mayank is the Co-founder & Managing Director of Asia s leading higher education focused edtech major,, upGrad, which within a span of 7 years has impacted over 3 million learners globally. He has served as VP Of education at Bertelsmann and as Senior Principal at The Parthenon Group. He further served as a Board Member of iNurture. He has also worked at the Tata Strategic Group, advising Tata's strategic direction.

Mayank Kumar, Co-founder & MD, upGrad sheds light on the company's inhouse personalised employee assessments and how AI-driven assessments are changing the hiring process. He also talks about how upGrad is driving meaningful career outcomes and LifeLongLearning.

Q. What is the talent and skills assessment strategy at upGrad - across hiring, retention, and L&D needs?

At upGrad, we have a diverse pool of talented employees across teams from Sales, Admission Counsellors, Marketing, and Technology to upGrad buddies, amongst others. And every employee is an active contributor to upGrad s successful journey and pursuit of driving LifeLong Learning. In order to assess talent across different brackets, we have designed personalised assessments in-house to evaluate talent competencies including (functional, technical, and people) behaviours and values of our employees. The assessments are based on a competency benchmarking approach and deploy pre and post-measurement tools to determine shifts in skills or behaviours. We also use the Kirkpatrick model for the assessment of training effectiveness. On the L&D front, since we are the advocates of LifeLong Learning and we believe in democratising education, our employees across upGrad are offered the entire gamut of upGrad courses for free.

> *Timely assessments help employers to understand employees' expectations, their strengths and how they are getting along with their work and reporting managers. It enhances employee passion and allows them to understand their contribution to the company s mission.*

Q. Does assessment also play a role in crafting employee experience? For example, creating a skills inventory for potentially deciding on leadership qualities in talent or tech talent for scoping a new technology?

Timely assessments help employers to understand employees' expectations, their strengths, and how they are getting along with their work and reporting managers. It enhances employee passion and allows them to understand their contribution to the company s mission. The process supports their engagement over time and helps identify employee skills and qualities in creating a growth path for the employee in the organisation. After all, it is employee experience that influences how long an employee wants to stay in a particular organisation. Assessment is also linked to promotions, or rewards and recognition for their contributions all of which contribute to the employee experience.

Q. The great hiring drive also exposed the lack of desired skill sets in the job market. At times, they have led to wrong hiring. How do you think assessments can help?

The turbulence in the job market resulting from the great resignation and the economy bouncing back post-Covid has led to the need for speeding up hiring. To ensure the right fit, the assessment goes a long way in ensuring that hiring anticipates the skills needed for a job. The assessment should be strategically carried out in a systematic manner and provide information about current and potential future skills needs. It should match skill sets to jobs and take into account any imbalances so that organisations can develop measures and take action.

Q. Assessment is still in its nascent stage where organisations are yet to warm up to it completely. What do you think will be the significant changes in hiring once it becomes a common practice?

Assessment helps to measure the capabilities and gather significant information about a candidate's personality, skills, and ability. Assessment tools such as aptitude and personality tests will increasingly come into use for hiring. Organisations will also use data and analytics to identify candidates with the right skills, traits, and abilities required for particular jobs. Any misrepresentation is quickly found out. Assessments also allow candidates an opportunity to showcase their skills and demonstrate their competence, work ethic, and emotional

intelligence. AI is becoming prevalent in many areas of business decision making, including hiring. Automated scoring systems and computerised adaptive tests, along with the Big Data analytics to Machine Learning are already changing the hiring game. AI-powered chatbots are optimising the hiring process by reducing time and cost of hire while improving the quality of hire and improving the candidate experience.

Q. How can the existing assessment platforms and tools be updated for the coming years? Especially regarding the ed-tech industry?

As mentioned, AI will help make the assessment-driven hiring process objective and science-based by eliminating prejudice, bias, and discrimination. Today, even as AI and ML are being widely used, predictive

assessments and data-driven tools are largely under-utilised in assessment. Technology can help remove the bias in decision-making by creating a highly structured and standardised interview that enhances the predictive utility of the process. Mining of data by AI and ML algorithms can identify connections and interviewees actions and their personality, ability, or job performance. AI algorithms can also leverage the same cues that humans do but do it better at scale through automation. AI in the assessment will help to significantly improve human decisions, especially when based on accurate and valid data.

Q. upGrad is looking to hire 3000 professionals in the next three months. What kind of roles are you looking to fill? How much will assessment aid you in this search for the right hire?

We want to clarify that the 3,000 additional team members that we are waiting to welcome, will come from a combination of a couple of Mergers & Acquisitions which are expected to be announced over the next 60-90 days. While the growth of teams will also happen within their existing business lines, we can expect recruitments to happen for major functions like content and products across the Enterprise/B2B business.

Q. Edtech is moving offline now. How do you see this trend and how much does it impact upGrad? There were trends about the war between edtech and coaching companies, where teachers are emerging victorious with higher salaries. Your view on this? What are the company s retention and hiring strategies?

The pandemic accelerated the shift to online learning, creating a unique dynamic in the world of education, between students and teachers, which is both tech-driven and human-led. The global health crises could not stop the journey of education owing to this integrated learning architecture. Due to its multimodal and interactive delivery, the adaptability to enable learners to upskill in these rapidly changing times is supported by a well-built infrastructure that encourages active participation.

It s important to be sustainable and valuable to your customer, whatever the model is.

We are functioning in an era that is dominated by technology and the revolution has disrupted the very operations of the industry. upGrad has always been synonymous with flexible and LifeLong Learning. In the online higher education sector, we have developed a strong panel of over 5500 mentors and career

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coaches who are either employed by major corporations, domestic or foreign colleges, or MNCs and have strong connections to the ecosystem as a whole. These business leaders are evenly distributed to handle content development, delivery, and alumni support. They connect with our learners directly, drawing on their expertise to strengthen the topic foundation and provide placement support for optimal career acceleration. Industry specialists who employ visuals, animations, edits, and simulations to make the learning process more immersive and engaging are responsible for designing and delivering 70 percent of the whole learning experience.

Q. While on one side startups are talking about big bountiful compensation and benefits to attract talent, on the other, there has been a series of layoffs in the industry, including edtechs. Reports peg over 2200 layoffs from this industry alone. What do you think could be the reason? What will be the long-term hiring and talent needs of the industry?

India has mammoth growth potential and skilled talent can add to the economy of the country, further strengthening its position.

The past year has been a year for startups wherein, they have shown their potential and attracted handsome investments. But, every penny comes with its own share of high and low and in this disruptive ecosystem it is crucial to be mindful of how to allocate the funds and create a sustainable business model. Startups with full-proof business models and strong foundations will never let go of the employees that have helped shape them. Education is a path where no one will ever stop walking, whether it s K-12 or higher education.

Our focus at upGrad is always on career outcomes and LifeLong Learning. We are in a business to transform lives and our employees uphold this vision as they are our representatives who help learners choose their career paths, and guide them every step of the way to achieve their desired professional milestones. A business or a product can t work with only consumers, there needs to be a human layer, to make the masses aware and persuade them towards that product, and that chief work is done by the employees.

Q. Do you think assessment tools can help an organisation secure a hire so efficiently that even during a downturn, the firm doesn't feel the need to cut down on headcounts?

> *Our focus at upGrad is always on career outcomes and LifeLong Learning. We are in a business to transform lives and our employees uphold this vision as they are our representatives who help learners choose their career paths, and guide them every step of the way to achieve their desired professional milestones.*

Organisations face unique challenges during a downturn. Data-driven hiring processes definitely help organisations to manage their hiring better and make it more efficient. But while the use of technology helps organisations to place the right person in the right job, we are yet to reach a utopian state. However, assessment tools leading to efficient hiring do help when organisations need to double down during an economic crisis. The right person in the right job can make all the difference with the person contributing positively to the organisation in crisis.

Negative economic news impacts the way in which employees,

both present and potential, make career decisions with job seekers putting much more emphasis on pay and job security. It is then that the advantages of efficient hiring come to the aid of an organisation and help preserve its brand image during a recession. Today, employees share their experiences and opinions about their employer organisation on social media. A downturn does not last forever and organisations that maintain a positive employer brand enjoy a clear strategic advantage in attracting the best of talent when the economy picks up again.

Q. DoSelect is one of the assessment tools that upGrad uses. What is your understanding and views about such online platforms and their business impact?

We use DoSelect for providing learning solutions to our learners and not for hiring purposes. It's not incorrect to say that the pandemic accelerated the need for various tech tools to incorporate and analyse the potential of the candidates. As AI has taken a front seat with HRs being the driver of the process, we at upGrad use multiple other tools for assessing the portfolio which has helped us eliminate hiring bias by solely evaluating the candidates' skills, knowledge, behavior, and readiness for the role.

by Moumita Bhattacharjee and Bruhadeeswaran R

Registered Name:	upGrad Education Pvt. Ltd, Nishuvi, Ground Floor, 75, Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli, Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400018
Year of Incorporation:	2015
Number of Employees: Name of the Founder:	4,000
Name of the Key Execs:	Ronnie Screwvala, Chairperson & Co-founder; Mayank Kumar, Co-founder & Managing Director; Phalgun Kompalli, Co-founder
Business Line:	a. Arjun Mohan, CEO - India b. Zubin Gandevia, CEO - International c. Minaxi Indra, President - upGrad for Business d. Rohit Agarwal, President - Finance e. Dr. Sanjay Kumar, President - Corporate Affairs & Public Policy
Workforce Growth:	upGrad is one of the few Integrated LifeLongLearning Tech Companies in the world, spanning the college learner to the working professional from the age group of 18-50 years, across Undergrad courses, Campus & Job Linked Programs, Studying Abroad, short form to executive programs to Degrees, Masters and Doctoral
Key HR Metric:	55% in Sales and Marketing, 27% in Learner Experience,11% in Product and Technology, and 7% in the rest of the organisation. We have also offered ESOPs to select employees in 2021 (right from entry-level to the leadership) to acknowledge their hard and commitment towards the company and also for trusting us in our growth journey.

As an upGrad employee, they and their family members can develop and upskill with up to a 100% fee waiver on any of the upGrad's programs to further support them in their LifeLongLearning journey.

Through our in-house Learning and Development and external training programs, they'll have numerous opportunities to sharpen all of their skills and become the best version of themselves. We finally aid them with these external programs and encourage them to go learn beyond what our programs offer to them.

With the multiplicity of career opportunities we provide at all levels and across functions, they'll get to create various career streams and become holistic professionals.

With our specially curated Leadership development journey, that involves psychometric evolution, 360-degree feedback, 1:1 mentorship, and interaction with industry CXOs, employees can learn, develop and grow themselves to become the 'Leader of Tomorrow'.

We ve partnered with expert Doctors and psychologists who are available 24x7 free of cost for all the consultations and support our employees need.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

HOW GAMIFICATION CAN HELP DEVISE

A STATE-OF-THE-ART TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGY

VISHWANADH RAJU

Head India Talent Acquisition, Dun & Bradstreet

Vishwanadh Raju is a seasoned Talent Acquisition professional with over 18+ years of experience in managing Talent Acquisition in Product Development and Investment Banking Captive organisations. Currently, he is Managing India Talent Acquisition at Dun & Bradstreet Technology and Corporate Services India LLP. In his previous stints, he has worked with companies like Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Deutsche Bank to name a few. An alumnus of IIM, Bangalore, Raju s expertise lies in both high volume and niche hiring, managing Global Talent Branding, Candidate Experience, and University Relations.

This article is based on a white paper on Gamification and its application in HR. In these edited excerpts, we look at some selections of the paper like how gamification in recruitment can help create a strong foundation for the talent strategy. For anyone who has heard of Gamification but is still unsure of what it is and what are its applications in HR, this article will tell you the key benefits you need to know.

Crafting a 21st-Century Talent Strategy

When it comes to incorporating gamification in recruitment and devising a state-of-the-art talent acquisition strategy, here are some points employers need to consider:

1. Define your objective

Formulate a successful gamification strategy knowing your objective. Then identify goals you want to achieve by gamifying your recruitment process. For example, you want to use the game merely as a tool to promote your employer brand or your objective is to test the candidates on their aptitude, cognitive skills, and personality traits.

2. Personalise the assessment

Customising your gamified assessments according to your needs is critical to building an effective gamification talent strategy. Since multiple employers fish in the same talent pool, a generic tool wouldn t serve the purpose. Plus, if you take run-of-the-mill tests, you will not be able to evaluate a candidate s true abilities. On the flip side, a generic game also damages your employer brand.

> **When using gamification in recruiting, the right approach is to communicate to the candidates how they will be assessed and how their performance data will be utilised. Providing a feedback report to each candidate after the gamified assessment is highly recommended. Even if you choose not to go ahead with an applicant, you should be stating the reasons for rejection.**

3. Make it engaging & fun

The mantra of the last decade has been to increase employee engagement . However, according to Gallup, only 34 percent of the workplace is engaged. The good news is that hiring managers can contribute to increasing employee engagement by leveraging gamified assessments to immediately engage potential employees. A brilliantly designed gamified recruitment plays a significant role in inspiring prospective recruits to engage with your company s careers portal and social profile.

4. Communicate with your candidates

When using gamification in recruiting, the right approach is to communicate to the candidates how they will be assessed and how their performance data will be utilised. Providing a feedback report to each candidate after the gamified assessment is highly recommended. Even if you choose not to go ahead with an applicant, you should be stating the reasons for rejection.

5. Make sure your gamified tests are relevant to the job role

While gamification brings the element of fun and ease of use to the otherwise dull recruitment process, its effectiveness cannot be disregarded. The gamified assessment that you intend to use should be developed after extensive research, so it s important to look for companies that are experts in gamification in recruiting.

If your gamified assessment lacks face validity i.e. the candidates find it hard to detect the relevance of the game to the job role, your organisation would not only risk reputational damage but also unknowingly compel candidates to exit the hiring process.

Debunking Gamification & Recruiting Myths

We have seen a lot of debate in the HR space about the use of gamification in recruiting. Most recruiters and their senior management are skeptical of leveraging these recruitment gamification tools. Therefore, it's important to talk about what are the myths about gamification in recruitment, mainly in terms of talent acquisition.

Lately, there has been a lot of discourse on the validity of gamification – precisely, the integration of game-style elements into work life. The split between the critics and enthusiasts has cultivated a handful of myths and misconceptions about gamification.

Let s debunk the biggest gamification myths you must often be hearing:

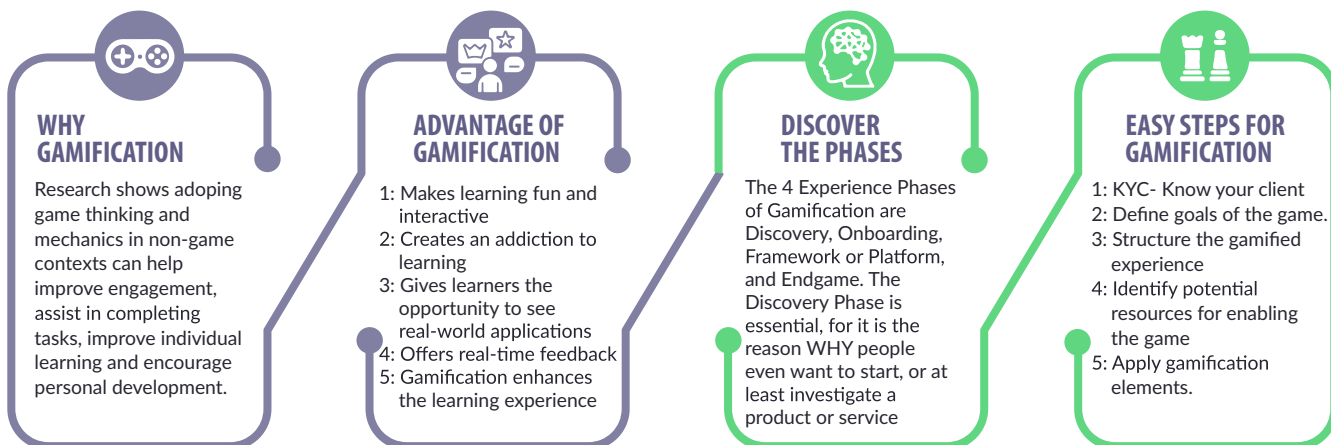### Myth #1 Gamification is only for Millennials

Although there is no doubt about

the fact that Millennials were raised with video games. However, Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Z are also acquainted with games. Each generation enjoys playing games and is motivated by different types of badges, rewards, and incentives.

Myth #2 Gamification is all about games only

In the HR space, gamification when combined with talent assessments becomes an arsenal for recruiters. While games are solely for fun, gamification leverages some aspects of games and a broader set of tools (e.g. game mechanics/dynamics, game design, gaming psychology, etc.) to achieve something i.e. to hire, onboard, increase employee engagement, and work productivity. It can also be used in other areas of the employee lifecycle.

GAMIFICATION IN **HR**

WHY GAMIFICATION

Research shows adoping game thinking and mechanics in non-game contexts can help improve engagement, assist in completing tasks, improve individual learning and encourage personal development.

ADVANTAGE OF GAMIFICATION

1: Makes learning fun and interactive
2: Creates an addiction to learning
3: Gives learners the opportunity to see real-world applications
4: Offers real-time feedback
5: Gamification enhances the learning experience

DISCOVER THE PHASES

The 4 Experience Phases of Gamification are Discovery, Onboarding, Framework or Platform, and Endgame. The Discovery Phase is essential, for it is the reason WHY people even want to start, or at least investigate a product or service

EASY STEPS FOR GAMIFICATION

1: KYC- Know your client
2: Define goals of the game.
3: Structure the gamified experience
4: Identify potential resources for enabling the game
5: Apply gamification elements.

Myth #3 Gamification costs a fortune

In fact, gamification in recruitment saves time and cuts down the hiring costs, allowing you to reach a wider audience in one go and pick the best candidates with no stress.

Leveraging Gamification in Recruiting Space

Gamification is essentially the application of game technology   game theory, mechanics, and gaming design   in non-game contexts. While companies initially used gamification solely as a marketing tactic to engage their consumers, it has disrupted workplace selection in the last decade, now serving as a viable alternative to traditional assessments and being used to attract, select, onboard, and develop employees.

While the media coverage of gamification in recruitment has increased over recent years, the process is not new. As a matter of fact, one of the earliest attempts to gamify recruitment was made in 1999 by the US Army. The US military came up with an ingenious idea to uncover the most talented prospects for hiring.

Other popular business examples of gamification: The Samsung Nation, Jillian Michaels Fitness Program, Starbucks, Nike+ Run Club, Progress Wars, Nissan Carwings, and Beat The GMAT

> *While companies initially used gamification solely as a marketing tactic to engage their consumers, it has disrupted workplace selection in the last decade, now serving as a viable alternative to traditional assessments and being used to attract, select, onboard, and develop employees*

An extensive Korn Ferry report reveals that there will be a global talent shortage of more than 85 million people by 2030. The jobs left unfilled in the media, communications, and technology could lead to about $8.5 trillion in unrealised annual revenues. Today s top performers won t acknowledge the old-fashioned ads that don t inspire them to rise to challenges or enhance already valuable skill sets.

To thrive in this ever-evolving digital era, organisations need to adopt an effective talent acquisition strategy that attracts top-notch talent and persuades them to bring their extraordinary skills to your company. But how do you do that?

Apparently, gamification in recruitment seems the right answer. Recruiting experts from the Society of Human Resources Management believe that gamification in HR can project an innovative image of an employer, drum up people s interest in job openings, and accurately predict applicants future job performance.

Build brand awareness

Gamification in talent acquisition, with its wide scope and customisability, has been helping companies improve engagement, strengthen their employer brand and personalise their recruitment process to discover the premiere talent, all the while making the hiring process fun. Using gamification in HR processes, organisations can both induct the best candidates and showcase their employer brand to hundreds and thousands of candidates.

Obtain more real insights into your candidates

Sometimes candidates fail to perform at their best in the tests and interviews due to anxiety or intimidation. Other times, HR leaders miss out on competent candidates merely because they haven t presented their CVs in an eye-catching layout.

With the application of gamification in recruiting, you provide candidates with a familiar and fun environment, allowing them to demonstrate their true potential in a relaxed atmosphere.

This, in turn, also enables you to evaluate each candidate s true abilities.

Reach a wider talent pool

When it comes to resumes, sifting the wheat from the chaff can be a really cumbersome task. And it becomes next to impossible when you have over a hundred resumes against a single job position. Plus, if you look at the flip side of the coin, you see companies struggling with not having enough candidates to select from due to their inability to reach the mass audience.

With gamification, employers can attract a broad range of candidates who may otherwise not have found a particular job opportunity on their own. In simpler words, gamification in HR serves as a talent surfacing engine, unearthing

top talent from unimaginable places and helping both employers and candidates find each other in a fun way.

Provide a level playing field

A strong candidate may come in many different shapes and sizes   young, old, neophyte, or an experienced professional. The potential star employee can belong to any of these backgrounds. But resumes cannot always represent the skills and capabilities that a candidate has to offer, especially for the ones who are new to the workforce and the industry.

Research shows that the traditional hiring process is biased and unfair. Unconscious sexism, racism, and ageism play a pivotal role in who gets hired. In fact, 81

percent of employers realise that unconscious bias impacts their decisions, which leads them to miss out on top candidates.

As an HR technology company, what we have noticed is that   most organisations use gamification-powered recruitment games to improve their candidate experience. After all these recruitment games are powered by gamification principles, AI, and neuroscience-based games.

Let s look at some organisations leveraging the power of gamification in recruiting and some top recruitment games examples:

Unilever

Unilever, the Dutch-British consumer-goods giant and one of

the world s leading conglomerates, has over 170,000 employees worldwide. In order to rejuvenate its recruitment process, the company partnered with an HR service provider, digitising the first steps of the recruitment process using AI.

Candidates play a selection of games that evaluate them on their reasoning, aptitude, and logic and then machine learning algorithms assess whether they are suitable for whatever job role they applied for.

Google

Tech giant Google organises Google Code Jam, a code-writing competition as a way to discover and induct outstanding talent for the company. Participants not only get a chance to display their skills as potential hires but also get a golden opportunity to win up to $50,000 in monetary prizes.

Siemens

The Germany-based industrial company Siemens is another company that experimented with games, at least in part as a recruiting vehicle. Siemens created an online interactive game called Plantville that provides players the opportunity to run a virtual factory.

While the game initially served as a kind of marketing tool to attract potential employees, the executives at the company later

In the HR community, companies are increasingly implementing gamification to drive higher employee engagement, boost productivity, and encourage healthy habits, among other outcomes. By tapping into people's innate love of playing games, employees are encouraged to solve problems while generating measurable results for the organisation.

made the game a part of their talent acquisition strategy.

Deloitte

Deloitte, a multinational professional services network, uses a gamified and interactive recruiting video to make sure new recruits understand the fundamental values the organisation is looking for in its employees.

Going by the name 'Will you fit into Deloitte?', the gamified recruiting video educates the potential hires about the company culture while also allowing the user to evaluate their own suitability for the workplace.

Marriott Hotel

Marriott, a hospitality giant, developed a hotel-themed game as part of its recruitment gamification strategy, in which applicants have to juggle all the responsibilities of a hotel kitchen manager. Players get acquainted with the workplace environment while simultaneously they earn virtual rewards that elevate the image of the company in their eyes.

By making gamification a part of its recruitment strategy, Marriott was able to bypass traditional hiring methods and assess beforehand the suitability of the candidates for the hospitality roles.

Nestlé East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR)

Nestlé East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR), the multinational food and drink processing conglomerate corporation, utilised gamified assessment to assess candidates on their aptitude, cognitive skills, and personality traits. By gamifying its recruitment process for the Future Talent Graduate Development Programme, the company was able to induct ambitious graduates.

OPINION

Leveraging Gamification in Business Partnering and Operations

Gamification uses the natural competitive attitude in people to trigger them to perform better. It helps employees to engage themselves better in the organisation.

Investment in gamification apps in crucial areas like onboarding, training, etc. should be made accordingly to aid in accomplishing the strategic objectives of the company.

In general, attributes like entrepreneurial spirit, quick and prompt decision-making, and problem-solving attitude were determined based on answers given during interview questions but gamification offers the opportunity to simulate the working environment and help create better selection techniques in procuring the best talent from the pool. For example, Marriott Hotels launched an app that will make candidates virtually perform hotel service tasks that will provide information about the way the candidate will approach the real work that will in turn help eliminate those candidates who will lack the desired patience and aptitude for the job.

Present-day performance management and performance appraisal utilise gamification. Well, it may be a good question to ask   that in the era of decreasing headcounts in organisations, how are employees going to stay engaged and how can using a video game in the office help improve employee performance related to actual performance appraisal? To answer this very simply, gamification tries to fit the entire performance appraisal process in such a way that employees performances are easily deciphered through gamification. Using badges and accolades for a great team player works as a traditional pat on the back of the employee by his/her boss. And that actually works.

Gamification is 75 percent psychology and 25 percent technology

There are various gamification platforms available today to suit multiple areas of HR. Whatever the goals of the company, there are numerous software that can provide an answer. Below is a comprised list of various software that helps in various aspects of HR functions:

> **Cuckoo Tech:** A gamifying code for time and attendance.

> **Employee Connect:** An engaging program for improving communication among employees.

> **Badgeville:** A comprehensive solution for keeping a record of employees, appraisals, overtime work, and so on.

> **Hyphen:** A platform for mobile real-time employee engagement.

> **Axonify:** It is a micro-learning gaming platform.

Mambo.IO: Mambo.IO offers on-premise and cloud-based software for gamification.

Spinify: It is the customised leaderboard platform for gamification. It is a TV and desktop-based solution.

Moroku: It is a web-based gamification solution suited for SMEs. It is Integrated with mobile banking and payment practices and also supports mobile gaming and social media.

HR Gaming In Enhancing Performance and Learning

Gamification is also used for enhancing learning and thereby boosting performance.

Microsoft:

Uses gamification to drive agent performance and learning.

Walmart:

Used gamification techniques to offer safety training to its scattered workforce of more than 5000 partners across its various distribution centers. This resulted in a 54 percent decrease in mishaps and also became a massive hit among employees.

Gamification In Employee Engagement And Collaboration

Qualcomm:

A simple gamification technique over stackoverflow.com site for its internal Q&A system where employees pose various technical questions, and anyone can answer. There were less number of unanswered questions and better employee engagement.

Gamification In The Administrative Process

Google:

Employees receive an allowance when going on a work trip for each location. Google gamified this process by making employees who had an unspent allowance choose how to utilise the remaining money with three options: integrating it with their next paycheck, saving for future trips, or lending to a charity of their choice. There was 100 percent compliance in submitting travel information within six months of launching the game.

Leveraging Gamification in Learning & Development

Gamification is a way of making the learning process more fun and engaging. It helps us learn faster and retain what we've learned.

In 2011, a group of online gamers collectively solved a problem in three short weeks that had puzzled scientists for decades: They found the structure of an enzyme that

> *In traditional workplaces, employees receive annual reviews that decide raises and promotions. In the gamified workplace, employees receive constant updates on their performance as they earn higher rankings and badges that get the attention of colleagues and supervisors. Companies like Spotify and LivingSocial have already replaced traditional reviews with mobile and gamified versions and have reported that 90 percent of employees are voluntarily participating in these programs.*

helps AIDS-like viruses reproduce. This communal discovery has become a go-to example that illustrates the benefits of gamification.

In the HR community, companies are increasingly implementing gamification to drive higher employee engagement, boost productivity, and encourage healthy habits, among other outcomes. By tapping into people's innate love of playing games, employees are encouraged to solve problems while generating measurable results for the organisation.

Here's a look at five creative ways more companies have implemented successful gamification programs:

Cisco Employees Play Their Way to Becoming Social Media Masters

Cisco had invested in a global social media training program for its employees and contractors to build and leverage their social media skillset. But with over 46 courses as part of the program, it was overwhelming to figure out where to start. Since gamifying its social media training program, more than 650 Cisco employees have been certified with over 13,000 courses taken.

How Deloitte Made Leadership Training for Senior Execs "Addictive"

Deloitte had built a leadership training curriculum for senior executives but had trouble encouraging executives to start and complete the program. Deloitte turned to Badgeville to introduce gamified elements like badges, leaderboards, and status symbols that measured how many executives were participating and completing courses. The average time to complete the training

curriculum dropped by 50 percent, and the program has seen a 46.6 percent increase in the number of users that return to the site daily.

Microsoft Staffers Around the World Weigh in on Language Localisation

Microsoft has myriad language localisation needs for its many products, and ensuring that translations were accurate and made sense was a huge challenge for just one team. Microsoft built a "Language Quality" game, which involved a very simple Silverlight application that let users view screens to check for language accuracy. Microsoft included intentionally poor translations to make sure its employees were actually paying attention. Result: 4,500 users reviewed 500,000 screens to correct or improve translations based on their native languages. Microsoft Japan actually

took a company-wide day off to play the game and ended up winning the leaderboard.

Benefits of Gamification in the Workplace

1. Gamification Increase Employee Engagement

The most often cited reason companies try gamification is to improve employee motivation. Apparently, there are a lot of workers who need the extra boost. According to a 2013 Gallup poll, 70 percent of U.S. workers reported themselves as not being engaged in their jobs.

Companies have found that gamification can help. LiveOps, a call center outsourcing firm, reported that adding game elements to reward employees reduced call times by 15 percent

while increasing sales by at least 8 percent and customer satisfaction by 9 percent. The company also reduced training time from four weeks to only 14 hours when it added badges and rankings to motivate its workforce.

2. Gamification Offer Immediate Signs Of Achievement And Progress

percent and customer satisfaction by 9 percent. The company also reduced training time from four weeks to only 14 hours when it added badges and rankings to motivate its workforce.

3. Gamification Allows The Best And Brightest To Shine

A vital benefit of gamifying business is that it helps companies identify their future stars and leaders. Rather than

just motivating the disengaged, gamification provides tools for motivated workers to contribute and be recognised.

Unlike in the past, when managers would call attention to their best employees, workers now identify with each other. NTT Data and Deloitte use gamification to provide their employees with the chance to learn about leadership roles, develop management skills, and become better known within their organisations based on their gameplay.

4. Gamification Is A New Type Of Credential

German enterprise software company SAP has used a point system to rank top contributors on its SAP Community Network (SCN) for a decade. Users of the social media site earn points when they contribute to forums and when their posts are liked. Rankings are visible on a global leaderboard, which is then used in employee performance reviews and when managers are searching for domain specialists when forming project teams.

Users have even begun including SCN ranking on resumes and employers are asking for them on job applications. What was intended as a purely internal metric to encourage community participation has become a valuable credential in the real world.

Conclusion

HR professionals must prioritise openness and confidence in incorporating Gamification in the current workflows and see how it can bring experience, efficiency, and effectiveness. A few early movers have paved the path as explained earlier which is a good case study for adoption and yes the personal touch is essential in the whole design of the gamified environment.

Gamification is here to stay and many more companies will start adopting it as part of their competitive advantage.

📷 SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Dun and Bradstreet - Jacksonville, Florida
Year of Incorporation:	1841
Revenue:	2.2 Billion USD
Spread:	256 Countries and Territories
Number of Employees:	6000 worldwide
Key Highlight:	Around 90% of Fortune 100 Companies are Clients
Business Line:	Leading global provider of business decisioning data and analytics
Founder:	Lewis Tappan
Key Executives:	Anthony Jabbour -Chief Executive Officer
Key HR Factor:	Focus on Diversity & Employee Wellness

CAN ASSESSMENT TOOLS HELP ORGANISATIONS MAKE BETTER SENIOR MANAGEMENT HIRES? HR LEADERS WEIGH IN THE POSSIBILITIES

When hiring for senior roles, resumes and experiences alone don't predict a new hire's success. Assessment tools can be a great addition to the recruitment process by letting HR decide what they want to measure and identifying candidates who will be a valuable addition to the workforce.

A RazorpayX Payroll report in April revealed that, among the new hires, the CEO and senior executive roles have seen maximum growth.

The senior roles saw the highest increase in headcount for the same to 123% in FY 22. Employee headcount in mid-level roles grew by 86% while entry-level roles saw a growth of 63%. The junior-level roles where the employee count grew by 92%.

This means there s a huge demand for talent at the top management. This demand, naturally, has led the CEO compensation to hit a new high this year making it hugely expensive and unsustainable for companies that are seeking leadership changes.

When it comes to senior hiring, a lot of variables come into play -- the talent needs domain expertise, the right culture fits and leadership qualities. The key attribute of a leader is the person should be able to lead the team to have better business outcomes. But identifying

the right person might not be as easy as it sounds. Assessment tools can thus be a great addition to the recruitment process.

However, a global Mettle l Mercer Leadership Trends of 2019 suggests that 42% of organisations have no competency framework to structure their leadership hiring process. The report also reveals that the average time to recruit a top leadership talent is 3.2 months.

In India too, the adoption level is quite low. However, according to Ritika Mathur, Partner, Human Capital Consulting at Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, this trend is changing dramatically. In the last few years, in my experience, the tide has turned in this case. The main reason is that B-schools have introduced psychometric analysis, specifically personality tests in their batch profiling. These tests, when used in conjunction with others, give a good understanding of the candidate's fit. This has cascaded to the corporates. So we are seeing a lot of organisations adopting psychometric analysis or personality tests as a part of this screening process, typically for very high stake roles.

Mathur also added here that the need for the same is building at the leadership level when they're hiring or promoting somebody. The usage of these behavioural assessments, leadership style assessments, or psychometric analysis, as they call it, has seen an upward trend.

The need for it

Pradeep Kumar, Business Head & SVP, Quadrangle too believes that the assessment tools should definitely be a part of leadership assessment practices. Although it should not be the only factor considered when making a hiring decision, it should be given a certain weightage along with education, previous experiences, personal meetings, and reference checks. It is always a good idea to use the same tools to evaluate the current set of leaders who are driving the business.

> *While hiring for senior roles, organisations want to go beyond skills and experience demonstrated in the resume or selection process. Psychometric assessment tools are of support here to understand the candidate as a whole person, perceive their natural style and preferences, recognise their motivations, and discover how they would fit in the current team + culture.*

 Choice of an assessment tool should be primarily based on the need of the organisation s basic principles as to what traits are important for its leaders who are in decision-making roles, Kumar asserts.

While hiring for senior roles, organisations want to go beyond skills and experience demonstrated in the resume or selection process. Psychometric assessment tools are of support here to understand the candidate as a whole person, perceive their natural style and preferences, recognise their motivations, and discover how they would fit in the current team and culture.

At Reliance-owned Zivame, the skill-based assessments are extensively used for hiring positions at scale. These assessments have led to reduced recruitment cycles and higher success in conversion rates for the organisation. Rishu Garg, Chief People Officer, Zivame shares, These assessments have helped us to appreciate diversity in individual preferences and drive customised inclusion plans based on different interpersonal styles. In the coming years, as more data is generated from these assessments, the success predictability and role-fit insights will continue to become sharper, which will further reduce the time taken for candidate selection, improve candidate experience, and help everyone in making smarter decisions!

The Challenges

But there are a few challenges that are keeping a lot of organisations from employing these tools for senior management hirings. Sometimes recruiters and hiring managers, when selecting lateral hires for a tech role, decide to skip assessments for experienced developers. This decision is often taken to prevent any discord. We have often heard experienced professionals being reluctant to prove their skills. It goes back to the same problem of choosing resumes over skills; just because a recruiter has the right resume, you would hire them over someone else who may be better equipped to lead the team.

Vishwastam Shukla, CTO, HackerEarth explains, Normally we think that a senior leadership role should only go to someone who has a certain kind of resume, say, ten to fifteen years of experience, a degree from a top-tier university, and so on. What this mindset does is that it automatically excludes candidates who do not have the prescribed pedigree from the hiring pool, even if they are equally skilled. He opines that by applying the same filter of assessing for skills to senior roles, companies would be providing opportunities and access to all candidates who are deserving of the job, and not just a chosen handful. This would go a long way in levelling the playing field for candidates across the spectrum, and hopefully, lead to healthier and more diverse tech teams that are built on merit alone.

> *Pradeep Kumar, Business Head & SVP, Quadrangle feels it is important to choose an assessor carefully. All assessment tools throw up a pattern of data and a generic reading of the same. How that information should be interpreted in the current business dynamics of the organisation will define the outcome and its effectiveness.*

Pick the right assessor

While mindset is one area that needs a bit of improvement, there are a few other concerns as well

when it comes to the assessment of senior hires. Kumar feels it is important to choose an assessor carefully. All assessment tools throw up a pattern of data and a generic reading of the same. How that information should be interpreted in the current business dynamics of the organisation will define the outcome and its effectiveness.

It is also important to help the assessee be in a professional setup and in the right frame of mind at the time of taking the assessment to have an honest and unbiased outcome. It is a good idea to have a discussion with the prospect post the assessment, framing the discussion around the outcome which may give a fair chance to the individual to share a point of view on why they take a certain type of decision, Kumar adds further.

With skills gaining demand and the gaps increasing, it is high time organisations go beyond resumes and make use of scientific data for senior management selections. It can eradicate ambiguity and bias.

By Moumita Bhattacharjee

HOW TO ASSESS A CHRO?

All this brings us to the question: how do you assess a CHRO? Apart from ensuring a sturdy recruitment strategy to meet all the hiring needs of an organisation, the HR head also needs to spearhead processes that promise business growth. In today's time, it is one of the toughest roles to have, which means it also seeks candidates who have the requisite qualities to lead the division. But then how do you assess the assessor?

Prabir Jha, Founder & CEO, Prabir Jha People Advisory and a Senior HR Leader who has headed the people function in several organisations including Tata Motors, Reliance, Cipla, and more, is of the opinion that it is ideal to assess a CHRO candidate. "Many senior people hire their CHROs intuitively. Given the experience, many a time they get it right. But often they don't. An average hire at the leadership level starts a mediocrity cycle almost overnight. Many Chief Executives need to understand this nuance. They need to be coached in probing better," he points out.

Jha is of the opinion that a CHRO's role is one of the most strategic leadership picks to make. In turn, this role helps shape the quality of talent and its supporting ecosystem. The way one assesses the candidates for this role can show the way for hiring in general, especially at executive levels. "It is useful to have an external assessment in place so that the probes can be sharper in subsequent conversations. Otherwise, too many interviews can be gamed and are actually a waste of time," he suggests.

However, confidentiality could be a big concern. Top-level candidates are rightfully sensitive to going through a process. "From my own personal experience, I can confirm not every system is as watertight as it claims. This can be very upsetting and embarrassing for any senior candidate, especially if not selected. The other big concern is the ability of the evaluation team to actually do a good job. Not every recruiting partner is as wholesome in assessment. In any case, no human assessment, despite the play of psychometrics, is an exact science. Finally, the inability of the hiring leader to use these inputs to build on rather than blindly accept the assessment is very varied," he adds.

But there is a probable solution, as Jha suggests. Apart from psychometrics, he also recommends understanding the quality of the evaluating team, the choice of questions, and follow-through. "Not asking the right questions or seeking the right experiences can completely destroy the quality of assessment. For top positions, it is not always practical but where possible a combination of tools for assessment is a useful baseline," Jha explains.

(DIAGNOSTIC) ASSESSMENTS AS A TOOL FOR HIRING RIGHT FIT AND IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS

RITIKA MATHUR

Partner, Human Capital Consulting, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP

Ritika has over 10 years of consulting experience. She also has experience as the chief of staff to CEO at GT India and has worked with the leadership team to redefine the firm vision, strategy, and organisation structure. She also leads the partner rewards and performance management process at the firm. Prior to her role with GT, she worked with EY where she played a pivotal role in setting up a new team within the EY global delivery centre focused on cross-sector market research.

We spoke with Ritika Mathur, Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, about the paradigm shift that is happening in the assessment industry, the role of assessment in training, retention and employee experience, and much more.

Q. Could you give us an overview of the Indian assessment services market? How pandemic is reshaping assessment post-Covid-19?

Theoretically, the industry's size was predicted to be around $750 million by 2021. Technical and competency-based assessments, which are very tangible in nature, have been prevalent in organisations, whether financial services or IT. These assessments, which evaluate IQ and skills, have seen a very high adoption rate.

However, historically, the industry has seen lower adoption of personality and behaviour exams. In the last few years, in my experience, the tide has turned in this case as well. The main reason is that B schools have introduced psychometric analysis, specifically the personality tests in their batch profiling. These tests, when used in conjunction with other tests, give a good understanding of the candidate fit. The corporates have been affected by this too. As a result, we are seeing a lot of organisations adopting psychometric analysis or personality tests as a part of their screening process, usually for extremely important roles.

Additionally, post-Covid, when the entire recruitment process moved to virtual mode, creating a comprehensive training program has enabled the adoption of psychometric analysis as well as a part of the overall evidence evaluation package. In conclusion, assessment tests have historically been used in India and have been primarily used for competency-based assessments. However, we see a demand notably increasing at the leadership level when organisations are hiring or promoting somebody, and there, the use of behavioural assessments, leadership style assessments, or psychometric analysis has seen an upward trend.

Q. Across the spectrum on all the assessment areas, how much of it has become more digital now?

The administration of tests has been digital. People are moving away from pen and paper, both on the technical side of things, as well as on personality tests. There are tools in the market that can even be customised internally to be able to administer these tests and surveys digitally, giving the flexibility to both employer and employee to be able to fill them

out at their own pace. The data collation, part of the analysis, becomes a lot easier when it is administered digitally because then you no longer have to essentially go ahead and collate all of it. So, from an administrative standpoint, it's a lot easier to do this digitally and then run analytics on the basic data that you've received. So, to answer your question, 90 percent of the time I have seen assessments being conducted digitally.

Q. For using assessment tools in hiring talent in senior leadership, where is the decision coming from? Is it that the company s board is now expecting to use assessment tools?

First is to have a general understanding of the key aspects for hiring leaders. Then there is the technical aspect. It's also crucial to pay attention to factors like cultural integration. So, for example, a person who has always been an individual contributor, may not be an ideal fit for a leadership position where they have to interact and work with multiple team heads. The cost of making a poor decision at a senior level

could have negative effects not just in terms of monetary aspects, but also disrupts the business.

Therefore, as these screening mechanisms and processes become a lot more sophisticated, there will be an increasing reliance on these types of personality tests to ensure that the right path has been chosen from the beginning itself.

Q. But some companies also use it for retention and training. Could you perhaps provide a brief overview of how this works?

We hear a lot about the millennial and gen Z workforce when it comes to retention. So, we conducted a survey sometime back to understand total rewards, for example, how it goes beyond just compensation. The results showed that people want to feel satisfied at work.

Earlier, if an employee was considering leaving, raising his/her remuneration would entice them to stay. But that trend is changing. Now, people are understanding that it is more than just compensation that drives retention, it's basically the satisfaction that people derive from the kind of work they do.

In essence, these assessments help you understand people s profiles, which then will help you evaluate their competencies. These tests will also assist in determining an individual s leadership style, and the kind of autonomy they need, including whether they like working as an individual contributor or in bigger teams at the senior manager or mid-manager level.

Therefore, through these tests, employers are truly capable of understanding what management styles will fit particular groups of their employees. For example, if you choose someone who values autonomy highly, you put them in a very process-oriented role and you will see their satisfaction level go up. Hence, these assessments give insights into what is going to motivate and encourage employees which will eventually increase retention.

Q. Are these tests administered periodically or like an exit interview kind of thing when the employee is leaving? How does it work?

For example, when someone moves from a mid-manager to a senior manager level, many of these assessments are administered at that time. However, during the course of the employment itself, they don't need to necessarily be administered periodically because you are assessing the personality of a candidate, not the knowledge or information that they hold, I am talking about psychometric assessments specifically.

Q. What is the role of assessment in training programs?

In essence, these assessments help you understand people s profiles, which then will help you evaluate their competencies. These tests will also assist in determining an individual s leadership style, the kind of autonomy they need, including whether they like working as an individual contributor or in bigger teams at the senior manager or mid-manager level.

First and foremost, people need to understand that these assessment tools are not appraisal tools. They're not telling an employer about an employee s performance on a specific task. They're describing their personality and cognitive abilities the person has to be able to take on a particular role.

If I take on the role of a business unit leader, my assessment tool will tell me that I excel at client management and innovation, but there is room for me to do more on the people management side of things, which is where I'm scoring low. This means that these are some of the development areas that the test has highlighted, which will then be incorporated into my training plan itself. And that's how typically organisations also end up using these tools to understand how people who are doing well in a certain role, how can they do even better? Therefore, these assessment tools work like diagnostic tools.

Q. Attrition is one of the major issues we are facing right now. What do you think about tech-enabled businesses or IT organisations using this as a tool to spot the early signs of attrition?

This is getting utilised by organisations frequently to determine whether the fit within the organisation is appropriate or not. Like I said earlier, to manage

INTERVIEW

attrition, it is important to ensure that people are motivated to do the work they've been assigned with.

Q. How can assessment effectively be used to enhance the candidate experience and employee experience?

These assessments can truly be helpful because they provide insight into the preferences, personalities, skills, competencies, and other characteristics of each individual. And those insights will help you understand what genuinely motivates someone and how it influences the employee experience. It's critical for an employer to make sure that the individuals they are hiring or promoting into a particular role are a good fit for that role. Otherwise, the training necessary for that role or the performance levels they are

> *First and foremost, people need to understand that these assessment tools are not appraisal tools. They're not telling an employer about an employee s performance on a specific task. They're describing their personality and cognitive abilities the person has to be able to take on a particular role.*

expecting won't be met. Therefore, these assessment tools make it possible to evaluate applicants to ensure that they fit the profile for which they are being hired or promoted.

Q. How can a company build a skill inventory of its tech talent?

Competency assessments help organisations do that by developing specific tests that allow for a very detailed assessment of the current competencies within the workforce.

For example, how many people are good with things like coding or are proficient with excel. To find out, competency assessments will first create a library of those skills that are required in the organisation across multiple tasks. Then map the proficiency level of the

workforce in each of these to know who are the strong performers for that particular skill. Hence, you'll be able to identify the people who need training specifically for those particular skills.

As a result, this contributes to both the training plan and any projects that may require a combination of the skills that you have mapped out in the library. They provide you with a ready database to determine who could be the best fit for a given project. So, before you actually go in and start defining your training needs, competency assessments play a very important role, specifically in a high-stake project, to quickly determine who in the organisation could be the best fit to deliver that project.

Q. What kind of business impact a solid assessment strategy can create?

In terms of the business impact specifically, we conduct detailed assessments every time someone moves from a role of an associate director to a director or a director to a partner because we want to ensure that people are ready to take on those responsibilities. These diagnostic assessment tools effectively give both the candidate as well as the panel a lot of insights in terms of what else they can do.

So at Grant Thornton, we are using these tools in a way that when somebody moves into a higher role, it will give the candidate a very clear understanding of what are the things that he/she needs to improve upon and help the

panel, people who are assessing the candidate, to know if he/she is ready to get into the new role or not. This again is done to ensure leadership fit, which directly affects the business. So, this is how I think assessments can really help in driving a business impact, both in terms of employee and employer experiences, as well as in terms of the business impact itself.

It is utilised to drive accuracy, leading to a far more accurate screening process overall, rather than efficiency in terms of time. Therefore, I wouldn't say that the business impact comes from reducing the time taken to onboard new employees; rather, the time you spend effectively to find the right candidate creates the biggest impact, as a result, lowering the costs associated with it.

By Bruhadeeswaran R

📷 SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Grant Thornton Bharat LLP
Year of Incorporation:	2020
Number of Employees:	7000+
Founders:	Vishesh C Chandiok
Key Executives:	Prashant Mehra, Siddhartha Nigam, Vikas Vasal
Business Line:	Business consulting
Key HR Factor:	good2Great Culture programme, Learning & Development, SuperCoach programme, Health & Wellness

POST COVID, SKILLS IN DEMAND FOR BFSI COS SHIFT FOCUS FROM DA,AI & ML TO CYBERSECURITY AND CLOUD-TECH

The pandemic accelerated the need to reskill and adopt financial technology in the BFSI space. As the financial services sector moves towards digital transformation rapidly, emphasis should be placed on bridging the skill gap and developing human capabilities ecosystems.

RITESH MALHOTRA

Business Head, Enterprise at Great Learning

Over the last decade, Ritesh has held executive portfolios including the roles of chief business officer/business head with the responsibility of the product, sales, marketing, alliances, and inorganic growth, and now operates in the Indian startup ecosystem as a leader in the burgeoning Indian EdTech sector.

On June 28, a 46-year-old resident of Mumbai lost Rs 2 lakh to a cyber fraudster after he decided to close a loan account by making a one-time payment. This is just one instance among a series of growing instances of frauds where scammers make use of gaps and dupe the customers in different ways.

Hence, from government agencies to regulatory bodies to financial services companies, all are rethinking business processes and operating models, through cloud-enabled platforms. This has led to a multifold growth in demand for niche skills such as cybersecurity and cloud tech, according to an internal study by a leading edtech company.

Emerging technologies like Blockchain, IoT, and RPA (robotic process automation) have also found a lot of use cases for implementation in the financial services segment, according to a dataset shared exclusively to AllThingsTalent, by Great Learning,

a global player in the professional and higher education segment.

The pandemic led work from home, and the growing cybercrimes, have led to an emergence of newer skill segments. For example, a study completed in February 2020 by KPMG, commented, "Institutions across the spectrum noted the importance of Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning to make businesses more robust and ensure strategic planning. Therefore, a growing need exists for increased professionals with such niche skills."

The study found that data analytics, artificial intelligence, blockchain and cloud to be the top hiring departments for fintech.

Following the pandemic, now there is a shortage of quality skilled talent since these are new age as well as niche skills. However, with growing applications of these technologies and more use cases being implemented by larger

numbers of organisations, demand for these skills has gone up multifold. Hence, while the focus is to develop talent for these skills, these fall under the niche skills segment.

A major challenge in digitising the BFSI sector is the availability of talent with key skills in emerging technologies. Although BFSI is among the top 10 recruiters in the country and is looking to hire more than 3 lakh professionals this year, the workforce is not equipped with industry-relevant and contemporary digital skills.

The company recently announced that its enterprise arm, Great Learning for Business has partnered with top the 10 BFSI organisations in India including the Reserve Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Bank of America, and Societe Generale amongst others, to upskill their employees.

According to Ritesh Malhotra, Head, Great Learning for Business, These skills continue to be the top skills today as the BFSI sectors have primarily functioned using traditional technologies, resulting in lower efficiency and unsatisfactory customer experience. However, advancing technologies are paving the way for the industry to digitise through emerging skills like artificial intelligence, algorithms, and data sorting that helps provide better customer insight .

While digitisation was already on the rise in all sectors, the pandemic accelerated the need, particularly in the BFSI sector since online transactions and net banking

EMERGING SKILLS

Cybersecurity

Cloud Tech

Blockchain

IoT

RPA (robotic process automation)

were the primarily targeted methods used as the world went into lockdown. The shift from traditional banking to online banking is here to stay considering the security and easy accessibility it comes with , he explained.

In the pre-Covid world, the focus was more on improving traditional banking using digital technologies with little or no focus on the scale. The adaptation to digitisation was slow and steady, but the pandemic accelerated the process as the world shut down. Pre Covid, some top digital skills were cloud, credit & risk management, and data analytics.

Niche Skills

Since the financial services sector is moving towards digitisation and digital transformation rapidly, there is a far greater need for cybersecurity and cloud technology for these precise reasons.

"With organisations adopting the hybrid models and moving away from "physical" offices - we see increased adoption across organisations. Blockchain is being used for implementing Letters of Credit (LCs), GST invoices, and e-way bills in the sector whereas IoT helps by providing customer data to banks and identifying their customers business needs and value chain. The use case implementation is increasing every day and hence these niche skills are becoming increasingly crucial for developing newer applications," Ritesh shares.

The firm also has a long-term partnership with one of the top-

TOP 10 SKILLS

- Big Data
- Data Analytics
- Artificial Intelligence
- Machine Learning
- Cloud Computing
- Java-based Programming
- Wealth Managment
- Financial Modelling
- Risk Management
- Agile & DevOps
- Analytical Tools (Power BI, Tableau)

Source: Great Learning

tier Indian private sector banks and has assisted them with digital transformation, skill gap analysis, and skill enhancement in areas of technology, IT, data, digital & cloud tech.

Bajaj Finance upskilled over 300 freshers in Data Science via Financial Services Academy

Reserve Bank of India conducted a 30 weeks training program for mid-senior staff in new-age technologies like AI, Analytics, Cloud Computing, and Cybersecurity

Societe Generale trained 500 employees in Cloud tech and Java-based programming

Digital transformations have paved the way for the BFSI sector to adopt emerging technologies. 45 percent of our enterprise learners base comes from the BFSI sector and we are focused on making them and their organisations adopt these technologies , said Ritesh Malhotra, Head, Great Learning for Business.

Through the Financial Services Academy, the company is planning to cater to multiple BFSI companies by creating custom learning outcomes and journeys for their employees based on their business goals. This is to enable them to adopt digital technologies into their traditional methods and yield better business outcomes, the company said.

TOP SEGMENTS WITHIN **BFSI**

- **Banking**
- **NBFC**
- **Insurance**
- **Global Finance Operation Centers**
- **Fintech**

The pandemic has increased the need for employing technology to create more precise financial solutions and forced the BFSI industry to question the status quo. Equipped with the right mindset and tools, it's time for management to reinvent the work that their employees do in collaboration with smart technology and get ahead of competitors in building the skills of the future.

By Bruhadeeswaran R

SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Great Learning, Gurgaon
Year of Incorporation:	2013
Number of Employees:	2000 approx
Founders:	Mohan Lakhamraju,, Hari Krishnan Nair, Arjun Nair
Key Executives:	· Aparna Mahesh, Chief Marketing Officer · Ritesh Malhotra, Head, Great Learning for Business · Harish Subramanian - New Product Development
Business Line:	Great Learning, a part of the BYJU'S group, is a global ed-tech company for professional and higher education and have collaborated with Stanford University, MIT, among others. It has catered to over 4 million learners from over 170 countries. The duration of the programs range of 5 months to 2 years
Key Investors:	After being bootstrapped for a significant time since its inception, Great Learning was acquired by Byjus in 2021.

EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT PLATFORMS CATCH THE EYE OF BUYERS AND INVESTORS

Human resource technology, or HR-tech, startups have been a step behind hotter segments like fintech or ecommerce in attracting top dollars but they have been slowly catching up.

Companies operating in HR management systems, payroll, recruitment platforms and other sub-domains within the HR-tech field globally saw over $12 billion in cash being pumped by VC investors last year, according to Pitchbook.

Assessments as a field under HR-tech was not at the top but did record a few notable deals and, in fact, contributed much more indirectly.

For instance, Baltimore-based HR-tech conversational recruitment startup Paradox gained additional spurs as it snapped up mobile assessment platform Traitify last August and later scooped up $200 million in a Series C investment round led by Stripes, Sapphire and Thoma Bravo. Other participants in the round that pushed it to the unicorn club included Workday Ventures, Willoughby Capital, Twilio Ventures, Blue Cloud Ventures, Geodesic, Principia Growth, DLA Piper Venture Fund

and existing backer Brighton Park Capital.

According to Emergen Research, the global assessment services market size is expected to reach $11.47 billion in 2027, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.2% during the forecast period.

Growing demand for skill evaluation to improve employability and improve overall efficiency or the organization and

increasing number of competitive tests across the education sector have accelerated the adoption of assessment services over the recent past, as per Emergen Research.

It is not just legacy consulting firms trying to carve a big chunk of this growing market but also startups.

Strategics assessing assessment ventures in India

In India, too, nearly a dozen assessment-focused HR-tech ventures attracted VC money and strategic buyers over the last one year.

The domain has been seeing action for a while now, especially from strategic buyers. Some global HR consulting majors have also used assessment platforms born in India to create a global business segment.

For instance, four years ago HR consulting firm Mercer acquired Gurugram-based online skills assessment startup Mettl. Mettl, which was founded 12 years ago by Ketan Kapoor and Tonmoy Singhal, both with IIT-IIM pedigree, also paved the way for Mercer s entry into what it termed as the rapidly growing global 5 Tools Organisations market.

A year later, SHL acquired Aspiring Minds to add an AI-powered suite of assessment and interviewing tools to its basket. Previously, AON Hewitt had acquired CoCubes, which was into online assessment and campus hiring.

Strategic acquirers have been at it more recently too, even as startups now have more choice for bankrolling their next round of expansion with VCs flushed with cash.

Info Edge, the company behind the top recruitment platform in the country, Naukri, snapped up Bengaluru-based DoSelect for Rs 21 crore, valuing it around 5x its revenue for 2020-21, last July. It

STRATEGIC DEALS IN ASSESSMENT
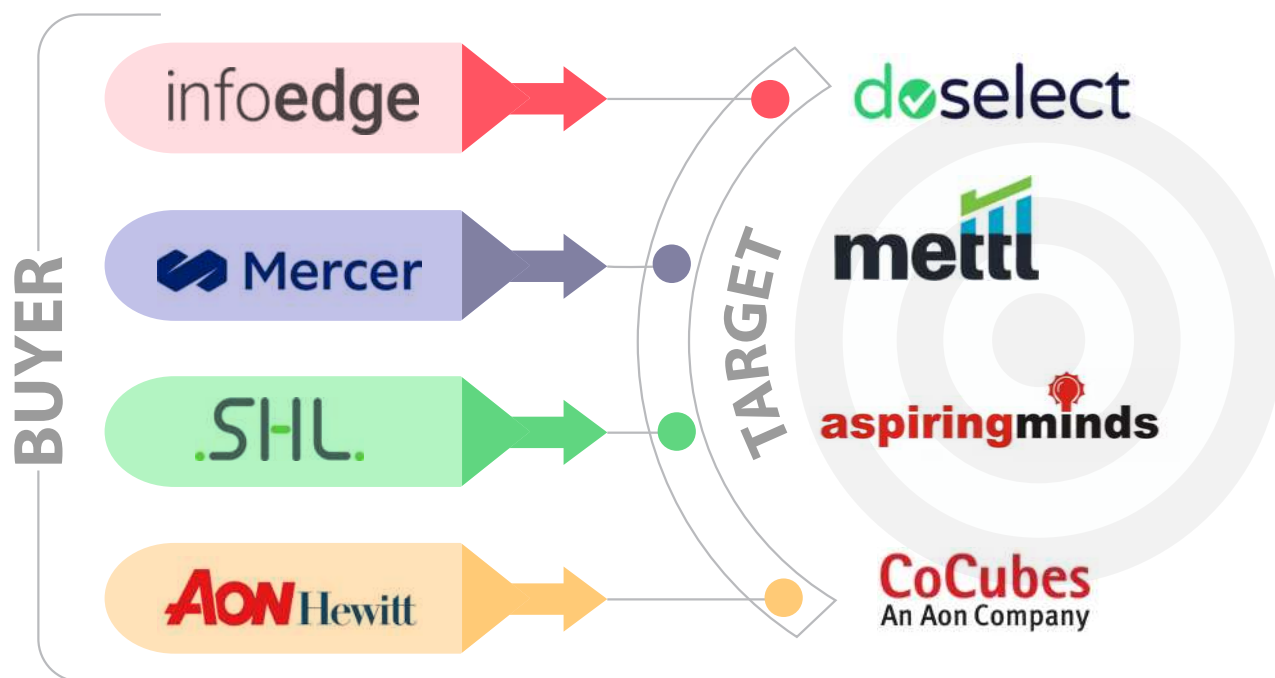
Source: Reports

later pumped in an additional sum to boost the business.

Founded in November 2015, DoSelect provides technical assessment services to its clients for recruitment and learning purposes. It delivers these services via its technical assessment platform.

Info Edge said at the time of the acquisition that the deal would help it offer a new variety of services under its flagship brand Naukri.com, allowing it to further consolidate its position in the online recruitment solutions segment.

If anything, such deals are only going to continue. The one difference that may creep in is the nature of buyers. While the acquirers till now were mostly legacy consulting and recruitment platforms, the next batch of acquisitions could be fuelled by startups who are well funded themselves as they go about adding features to their one-stop HR management platform and software products.

This would not only boost their business but also allow VCs who have backed assessment-focused HR-tech startups to find an exit route and a way to recycle the money and go after new ventures in the field. Indeed, some of the assessment-focused companies that were acquired in the past were themselves backed by VCs.

Mettl was backed by Kalaari Capital, Blume Ventures and several angel investors while

Baltimore-based HR-tech conversational recruitment startup Paradox gained additional spurs as it snapped up mobile assessment platform Traitify last August and later scooped up $200 million in a Series C investment round led by Stripes, Sapphire and Thoma Bravo. Other participants in the round that pushed it to the unicorn club included Workday Ventures, Willoughby Capital, Twilio Ventures, Blue Cloud Ventures, Geodesic, Principia Growth, DLA Piper Venture Fund and existing backer Brighton Park Capital.

CoCubes was funded by Ojas Venture Partners.

Moneybags round the corner

Indeed, if the state of funding in the HR-tech field in the country is anything to go by, assessment as a sub-domain has been backed by angel investors as well as seed-stage investors in the past. It is not yet high up the stack with late-stage VC funding, but has seen a clutch of early to mid-stage VC deals.

One of the more significant funding deals in the assessment space in India recently was the Series A round of iMocha, an artificial intelligence-powered digital skills assessment platform. The venture raised $14 million in January led by Eight Roads Ventures with participation of existing investors Upekkha and Better Capital.

Founded seven years ago, iMocha helps employees and recruiters to assess individual skills proficiency with job-roles leveraging AI simulators, interviewing tools and analytics.

Last year, Talview, a provider of AI-powered hiring and proctoring solutions, raised $15 million in Series B funding led by Silicon Valley investor Eileses Capital with participation from existing investors Storm Ventures, Inventus Capital and Emergent Ventures. The startup, which had previously rebranded from Interview Master, seeks to unify how organizations screen, interview and assess top candidates and learners with an engaging experience.

In another recent transaction, PMaps, a provider of visual

SPECIAL FEATURE

assessment services, last month raised a Series A round to top up the seed round of last year and angel funding a few years ago.

Two-year-old Skillr, which helps organisations build their customer-facing teams by providing them with assessment services and identify the areas for improvement besides a career development path, raised pre-seed funding from a bunch of top angel investors.

That said, there have been a few crossover ventures like Bangalore- and California-based HackerRank, which raised a $60 million Series D funding round led by Susquehanna Growth Equity, taking its total funding to date to more than $115 million.

To be sure, these Indian assessment startups still have a long way to go as against global peers like Amsterdam-based TestGorilla, which raised $70 million in a Series A round last month.

If anything, such deals are only going to continue. The one difference that may creep in is the nature of buyers. While the acquirers till now were mostly legacy consulting and recruitment platforms, the next batch of acquisitions could be fuelled by startups who are well funded themselves as they go about adding features to their one-stop HR management platform and software products.

Then again, the flow of money in the assessment domain is skewed towards ventures that focus on recruitment. If it is to go higher up on the radar of investors the startups would also need to provide a much more comprehensive suite of services that automates assessment of existing employees as that can be a more scalable business and currently dependent on manual interventions.

Net-net, the VC-funded assessment startups would be ripe to pick for the consulting and recruitment majors as automation gathers pace and their clients ask for a streamlined HR management system, instead of basic dashboards. At the same time, some of the bigger funded ventures such as DarwinBox could look to add the missing pieces in their service offering going forward. In either case, assessment startups within the HR-tech field will continue to see both financial and strategic investor interest in the near term.

VC DEALMAKING IN ASSESSMENT HR-TECH STARTUPS

Startup	Amount ($ mn)	Stage	Investors
HackerRank	60	Series D	Susquehanna Growth Equity, JMI, Khosla Ventures, Randstad Innovation Fund and Recruit Holdings
TALVIEW	15	Series B	Eileses Capital, Storm Ventures, Inventus Capital, Emergent Ventures
imocha	14	Series A	Eight Road Ventures, Uppekha, Better Capital
SKILLR	1.2	Pre-seed	Angels
PMaps	0.7	Series A	Indian Angel Network, LetsVenture

Source: Reports

DEMYSTIFYING ASSESSMENTS AND PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

Today, psychometric tests have become a common feature in the selection process during recruitment. Still, there exists a gap between the current and ideal recruitment practices. Manavi Pathak of TATA Trent explains common misconceptions about psychometrics and how they can be used in the selection process.

MANAVI PATHAK

Head, Talent and Leadership Development, TATA Trent

Manavi is a seasoned HR professional with over 15 years of experience in HR Consulting and Academics. Prior to this, she has worked with some big names in the industry namely, TATA Motors, Cipla, KPMG to name a few. An alumna of XLRI Jamshedpur, she has done her Ph.D. in Organisational Behaviour. Her specialities include   Talent Management, Psychometrics, Assessment, Leadership Development, Competency Mapping, Organisational Change, and Executive Coaching.

Do you have a psychometric test that measures *Gandhigiri*? asked the HR manager of a retail organisation. I have a huge problem with my guys, I would like to know where they stand in terms of hmm, err, Gandhigiri, if I can't find a better word". I had a good laugh at first but was also impressed to see how HR managers are on the lookout for innovative methods to achieve their objectives. This incident happened almost a decade back. It is memorable because it is relevant even now as most sectors in India are grappling with serious manpower issues and the HR professionals need to adopt efficient assessment tools to tackle this challenge. The selection scenario in India has undergone a sea change in the last decade. More and more companies are moving out of the traditional unstructured interview-based selection and are trying to make the selection system more robust by incorporating psychometric tools to arrive at the final decision.

Psychometrics or cognitive and personality tests are designed to facilitate employers in making effective selection and development decisions. If used correctly, they can prove to be extremely cost-effective supplementary tools for both initial selection, subsequent development of employees, and managing underperformers. In India, until the last few decades, the recruitment process had mainly focused on interview techniques. Interestingly, now more and more companies are using psychometric tools in various HR processes.

Senior HR professionals believe that the trend began more than a decade back when MNCs entered the Indian market and the demand for psychometric instruments increased. Most US & UK-based companies use psychometric tests for selection, coaching, and learning and development. HR is an established discipline in India and the usage of psychometric tools is fairly widespread, however, organisations sometimes struggle to find the right tools to use and incorporate them as a part of the selection process.

Psychometrics as a selection tool:

Psychometric tests consist of cognitive and noncognitive tests (e.g., personality tests). Cognitive tests assess individuals on various parameters: numerical, verbal, mechanical, analytical ability, etc. These tests are used mostly for recruitment purposes and to screen out individuals who do not meet the cut-off score. Noncognitive tests mainly consist of personality tools which assess the individual in terms of various personality or trait-related dimensions. This tool becomes important since it provides the much-needed extra information about an individual which is beyond his academic/professional credentials. Imagine a typical recruitment scenario in India: the numbers of job applicants often exceed the openings available.

It is then critical for the organisation to deploy psychometric tools which are user-

friendly and also deliver fast and accurate results. Especially when the applicant pool is large and their educational background makes them a homogeneous lot mostly in B.E, B.Tech kind of an applicant pool, this extra information can be a huge differentiating factor. However, it should be kept in mind that psychometrics cannot be a sole decision-making criterion and it should be used as a tool to supplement or corroborate the already existing information. Why is this so? This is because most of these tests are simple online or paper-pencil tests which can be manipulated by the candidate to provide incorrect information about him/her. Therefore, a word of caution is advisable for those who might over-rely on these tools. It is also important to understand that even if someone tries to manipulate these tests, there are lie-scales embedded in some of these personality tests to detect the trick.

For example, the 16PF personality test has a lie-scale which can find out if the test taker has tried to fake his/her responses. Also, a trained test evaluator or psychologist will be able to detect such an attempt by the test taker. Hence, it is advisable to use a standardised psychometric test and take the help of a trained and certified qualified professional to interpret the results of the test.

Myths associated with psychometric testing:

Most Human resources professionals in India do not

possess adequate knowledge about psychometric testing. The use of psychometric tests by HR Managers is dependent on several things: their education & experience, the country they work in, test publisher marketing, access to popular articles about testing and assessment, etc. Most of the B-schools barring, a few, do not teach a course on psychometric testing and the learning happens mostly on the job. Often the information that the HR professional has is incomplete and incorrect and therefore it is important to clarify some of them.

1. The psychometric test tells 'inside out' & reveals what is hidden:

Often, most psychometric tests, referring to personality tests, assess an individual on certain parameters or traits. If the test is standardised and has sound psychometric properties and has been interpreted by a trained & certified professional it would be safe to assume that the picture presented by the test more or less resembles the actual personality characteristic. However, some discredited psychometric tools are never accurate, reliable, or fair. Also, as mentioned above the results should be used as additional information and not as a stand-alone decision making criteria. It is also important to keep in mind that all these measures have an 'error' component.

2. All personality tests are the same:

Another misunderstanding which prevails with most HR managers is that all personality tests are the same. It is important to understand that the 'labels' assigned to personality characteristics could be the same, what one needs to see is the way those labels 'are defined. For example, two tests would define "leadership" differently; therefore, it is for the organisation using the test to pick up and choose which definitions meet their requirements and use it accordingly.

3. '80' is the double of '40' and more is better:

Often the test scores are interpreted literally . The score of '80' on a dimension, for example, trust is interpreted as being double of '40', accompanying this interpretation is 'higher the score, the better it is'. This is not always the case and the situation or context has to be taken into consideration. High Extraversion might be the job requirement in some jobs or professions and

would not add value to another type of job.

4. Tools developed in one cultural setting can be used in another:

This is a debatable issue and people have differing views. One school of thought says that we need global thought leaders to build the next generation enterprises so that the tools developed in western countries can be used here. A different point of view is offered by Vijai Pandey, a former Central Test executive, who says that using global tools in India is not going to work anymore; we have to consider the cultural context. India is diverse and the entire country can be divided into four cultural groups. We cannot ignore that.'

5. There exists a typical "success profile":

Unfortunately, there is no one 'best' profile which will guarantee success across the board, as different organisations require different competencies at different times. For example, if looking for a leader of a business keen to grow and develop in new directions, one might look for a transformational leader scoring high on forward thinking & innovative scales. If looking for a leader who will come in and manage the status quo one might recruit a manager who scores highly on democratic, conventional, and rule-following scales.

Psychometrics & Indian scenario:

There is a need for a professionally managed recruitment process. The most crucial gap between the current & ideal recruitment practices is the failure to pay attention to behaviour-based recruitment. In India, interviewing technique represents the final selection touchstone. There is over-dependence on one selection tool and probing in an interview is done at a very superficial level. It is evident that there is a need for an efficient, quick, and easy mechanism to assist in the recruitment process.

The use of psychometric testing in India is at an initial stage. More and more companies are seeking newer methods and are keen to know more. SHL, DDI, and Korn Ferry are a few global companies that have made their presence in the Indian market. Additionally, these organisations have also translated many tools into local languages like Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, and Oriya. You need to rely on an Industrial-Organisational psychologist or a trained professional so that you can make an informed choice.

Mostly psychometric testing is used for recruitment purposes. The IT, retail, and insurance sectors that are labour intensive use these tests mainly to screen out people. With a few exceptions, most organisations do not use psychometric testing for campus recruitment at B-schools. The use of tools for coaching purposes is not uncommon. Using

⚬ POINTS TO REMEMBER

Popular Tests Used in India:	OPQ, 16PF, MBTI, FIRO-B, PPA, DISC, and other ability tests
Organisations Providing Assessment & Related Solutions:	SHL, DDI, Korn Ferry
Purpose of Psychometric Tools:	Recruitment & Selection (Mostly), Learning & Development
Challenges /Barriers to Use:	Cost, Lack of Awareness, Lack of Expertise
Pricing:	Varies from 500 5000 (Rupees)
New Development:	Tailor-Made Tests, Online/Technology Enabled Testing
Organisational Requirement:	High Predictive Validity (More Accurate Results)

psychometric tools gives more data points to discuss with the individual and gives better insight into understanding the personality.

Since most of the standardised psychometric tools do not come cheap, most organisations are reluctant to use them. A personality test by a well-known organisation can cost between 3000   5000 (INR) (for junior management) and more than 10,000 (INR) (for senior management). HR managers need to convince themselves before they can get a   buy-in from the line managers to use these tools in their organisation. Often there is reluctance from the senior management to take these tools and use the results for developmental purposes. One of the line managers with whom I had interacted argued that   attitudes, values, beliefs are too subjective and cannot be measured . But the reality is that they can be measured and are important predictors of behaviour, performance, and potential.

Interpretation of test results & feedback is an integral part of psychometric testing. Psychometric tools are best used in conjunction with other assessment and selection tools such as interviews. Administration of psychometric tools also includes a feedback interview which, particularly in the case of personality questionnaires, can act as a supplementary source of information on the candidate. This needs a trained & certified psychologist who can handle it in a professional manner. There have been plenty of horror stories reported about the misuse of psychometric tools. Therefore,

it is the responsibility of HR managers to either get trained in using psychometric tools or take professional help in the administration & interpretation. There are plenty of training programs or workshops which impart adequate skills and expertise to HR professionals to use various psychometric tools.

Finally, it is important to understand that the potential

for growth of psychometric testing in India is immense. It is the responsibility of HR to educate themselves in a better manner and start using these tools for various HR processes. For organisations engaged in developing assessment tools and providing related solutions, it is important to understand the needs of the companies and accordingly develop simple, easy, and cost-effective tools.

SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Trent Limited
Year of Incorporation:	1998
Business Line:	Fashion Retail stores - Westside/ Zudio/ Landmark - over 400 stores across India
Hiring Pipeline:	Wide expansion across the country - Retail store

Over 60,000 Indian startup workers fear losing their jobs

IANS reports that over 60,000 jobs could be lost by the end of 2022 as startups in India continue to lay off employees in order to get through the "funding winter" amidst the ongoing economic meltdown. Several top companies including the likes of Ola, Blinkit, BYJU's (White Hat Jr, Toppr), Unacademy, Vedantu, Cars24, Mobile Premier League (MPL), Lido Learning, Mfine, Trell, farEye, Furlanco, and more have laid off nearly 12,000 employees till date. The report points out how, despite the nation's plans to welcome 200 unicorns over the next four years, the ratio of layoffs is exponentially increasing.

Tech Mahindra plans to hire 1,000 for Coimbatore Campus

Information technology major Tech Mahindra inaugurated its new campus at Tidel Park in Coimbatore on July 4. As part of its effort to employ local talent, it aims to hire 1,000 people in FY 22-23. The new campus - spanning over 10,000 sq. ft. - will focus on building a next-generation technology hub in Coimbatore with an aim of delivering cutting-edge solutions for the company's global customers in various industry segments such as automobile, banking, e-commerce, finance, and research & development. The campus will also focus on developing new technology stack pertaining to Intelligent Automation, Artificial Intelligence/ Robotic Process Automation, etc.

Hiring Activity sees record 22 percent YoY growth in June: Naukri JobSpeak

The Indian job market continues to show positive hiring sentiments as the Naukri JobSpeak Index stood at 2878, which was only second to the peak in February'22 when it crossed 3000. Since the start of this year, the country's hiring activity has shown an upward growth trajectory. The latest Naukri JobSpeak Index observed a +22 percent y-o-y growth in June'22 v/s June'21. The demand in metros and non-metros especially showed an optimistic upward trend. Amongst metros, Mumbai continued to lead the race for three consecutive months at 43% y-o-y growth.

FIVE ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO FACTOR IN YOUR RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

As the Indian economy bounces back from the Covid-19 pandemic, recruitment activity has ramped up. Although recruitments are not linear across sectors, hiring activity showed robust year-on-year growth last month.

Naukri JobSpeak, a monthly survey, showed that hiring activity remained buoyant in May 2022, sustaining the monthly run rate via a vis April 2022 while growing 40% compared to the previous year. Moreover, employers intent to hire freshers was up 61% compared to May 2021.

If we look at IT, one of the bigger employing sectors, the top three local companies have been on a hiring spree even in the midst of the pandemic. Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro have increased their global workforce by 50% on average over the last five years. They had over 1.1 million on their rolls as of March 31, 2022.

In the five-year period, they have increased their headcount by 3.86 lakh people. Of this, nearly 2 lakh people or more than half were hired in the 12-month period ended March 2022.

Given the velocity of the recruitment activity in the country, human resource departments are increasingly depending on automation and assessment tools for screening candidates. These tools straddle various aspects like psychometrics and aptitude, besides specific skills like coding, and help recruiters streamline and simplify their recruitment drive to get the best job-fit candidates on the rolls.

Here we consider a set of assessment tools to pick for recruitment needs.

Behavioural Assessment

These tests assess a candidate s work culture and team fit, besides foreseeing performance fit via simulation. This is a critical aspect of hiring that goes beyond the skill set as a wrong hire could affect the confidence, enthusiasm and discipline of the entire team.

These could be via realistic job previews with scenario-based quizzes that give candidates a feel for what the job would be like before they commit to applying and situational judgement tests that match a candidate s behavioural fit to the role with immersive, interactive scenarios and effective screening at scale.

One can also divide it into both an online and offline module. The online mode would straddle in-box exercises to choose the best possible responses to the issues presented in the mails; caselets to solve the problems highlighted in a business scenario; case-study-simulators to find relevant information, diagnose issues, and recommend actions. Caselets and case-study simulators could be especially useful for mid-senior role hires.

In the offline mode, these tests could be via behavioural interviews, role-plays, group discussion and case-presentation.

Cognitive Assessment

These tests enable recruiters to assess a potential hire s ability to quickly learn, solve problems and comprehend new ideas and achieve performance targets.

Cognitive assessment looks at the ability to execute complex tasks related to problem-solving and learning. In effect, it forces the candidate to use cognitive skills to think, learn, read, remember, concentrate and focus on daily tasks and process new information.

These tests often include multiple-choice questions, sentence completion, true-false or short answer formats, covering aspects like reading comprehension, quantitative aptitude, reasoning ability, problem-solving skills, attention to detail, situational judgment and emotional intelligence.

Communication Assessment

Communication skills are among the key desirables from a potential hire but there is a major gap between what a candidate comes up with and what is required for a role.

This becomes critical for job roles such as sales, marketing, customer service and business development.

These communication tests seek to gauge skills sets related to speaking (ability to speak clearly, correctly and coherently), listening (listen attentively and clear understanding of what others communicate), reading (ability to read, process, retain and synthesize vast tracts of written information), and writing (ability to write fluently and clearly, to express ideas and thoughts effectively).

Psychometric Assessment

These are assessment tools for bringing objective measurement of a candidate s personality traits,

aptitude, intelligence, abilities and behavioural streak. In effect, these tests intertwine aptitude and personality tests and are meant to help firms reduce employee turn-over thereby driving down overall costs that come with training and rehiring due attrition.

These tests could be a combination of the Big Five theory, Iceberg Model , Critical Thinking and Abstract Reasoning.

These, in turn, straddle dimensions like extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. In addition, psychometric assessment can have an in-built model for competencies that talks about the easy, limited information of education, experience, skills, and gut feel in combination with essence of person, motivations, thinking and cultural fit.

They may also bring in a test designed to assess an individual's ability to digest and understand situations and information besides measuring abstract reasoning.

Domain/ Coding Assessment

These are domain-specific assessments for one of the more common skills required in the technology space these days   coding. These tools seek to benchmark candidates coding capabilities and testing their domain knowledge.

Some tools offer a performance-based online coding test platform with real-time feedback to help companies assess candidates coding skills for performance benchmarking and effective recruitment. It could be integrated with domain-based online

programming tests to assess abilities for instance: Java, C programming, SQL, PHP, HTML etc.

For instance, these tests could gauge language prowess with programming questions that assess conceptual understanding of individual paradigms of a programming language. For instance, a candidate being assessed on Java could be ranked on conceptual understanding and execution of Inheritance, Polymorphism and OOPS in her code.

It could also incorporate an auto code quality analyzer that details all violations in a candidate s code and allots a quality score saving HR team s man-hours and serving as talking points for further rounds. It could also measure technical skills for the code, test, debug, and deploy cycle.

TATA Steel brings 18 transgenders on board to diversify its workforce

Tata Steel has further expanded its transgender employee base by onboarding a new batch of 18 transgender people at its shared services division in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. Last December, Tata Steel's West Bokaro Division onboarded 14 transgender people. So far, a total of 97 transgenders have been employed at locations including Kalinganagar, West Bokaro, and Jamshedpur. Tata Steel has set a target of having a 25 percent diverse workforce by 2025. Tata Steel has been certified as a gold employer under Workplace Equality Index for the LGBT+ workforce.

MakeMyTrip will grow its team of all-female holiday experts

MakeMyTrip's plans to increase its all-women team of 'holiday experts' boosted by consistent growth delivered and highest-ever packages sold by them in the last fiscal. In FY'22, this team of women freelancers, serving as Holiday Experts, helped curate packages for nearly two lakh travellers – closing the year with the highest-ever packages sold by these experts in over 10 years. During the pandemic, the company saw a 200 percent increase in interest from women freelancers in joining this team from these markets. Currently, MakeMyTrip has over 850 women holiday experts with 43 percent of them being mothers and caregivers working from metros such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Indore, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, and Lucknow.

UKG INDIA IS MOVING THE DIAL ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

SUMEET DOSHI

Country Manager-India, UKG

As a country manager - India for UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group), Sumeet is responsible for the vision and execution of UKG s long-term strategy and growth in the Indian workforce management market. Prior to working with UKG, he held marketing, sales, and business consulting roles at companies such as Aditya Birla Group, Oracle, and Tata Consultancy Services.

Sumeet Doshi, Country Manager-India, UKG talks about the company s inception and journey, how it is bridging the workforce management gap in the Indian markets, and its HR delivery solutions that have put it on the global map as one of the leaders in this space.

Q. Can you give an overview of UKG's business in India and overseas? What is the contribution to the global workforce, in terms of business and employee?

We have a long and illustrious history as a company, but UKG as a brand was officially created on October 1, 2020. It was formed by the merger of two very large companies, each of which is a market leader in its own right: Kronos and Ultimate Software. Both these companies came together on the 1st of March 2020 and on October 1st, the company was officially named UKG as part of the merger. UKG incorporated both the brand names U for Ultimate Software and K for Kronos. So there you have it, the Ultimate Kronos Group. Kronos itself has been a company founded in 1977. It's almost a 45-year-old company that specialises in workforce management.

Global revenues are in the range of roughly 3.2 plus billion USD. The total number of employees globally is around 14,600. We've developed quickly since then. I was in fact, the third employee of Kronos, India at that point. Recently, we crossed the 2000-employee mark in India. In fact, in the 15 years that we've been operating in India, we've grown to over 2100 workers in a variety of roles such as local sales and marketing, engineering, product development, cloud, and so on.

Q. So, are all 2100 employees focused on the India business, or is any global outsourcing also done on-site here?

It is a mix of both. For example, if we look at the good chunk of these 2100 employees in our engineering and product development teams, they are focused on global product development, including India. Then we have a cloud team which supports customers in India as well as across the world. Hence, a lot of these teams tend to straddle across geographies because of the nature of their job. And that's where your synergies and benefits come in. And then, of course, we have very specific sales organisations for India as well.

Q. Could you offer us some more information regarding your solutions in the country?

Our focus and solution approach in the Indian market, and for most of the global markets is around workforce management. When we started operations in 2007, we realised that workforce management is a big gap area in the Indian markets. There are two parts to it.

> One is the life cycle management of an employee;

> The second is, managing your employees, especially in organisations like manufacturing, retail, and healthcare BPOs.

Let's take manufacturing for example. The output comes in from the people on the shop floor. The job of HR in manufacturing is to identify the right amount of people who come in at the right time, right shift, and with the right skills so that they can go ahead and produce that product and deliver it to the market.

When you visit an IT company or a

bank, you'll see that a lot of effort is put into improving the employee experience. But how much is being done in the manufacturing industry to improve the experience of the 80% of non-white collar workers? That's where using digital solutions, like workforce management, actually helps take care of employee preferences and their requirements, and at the same time, deliver better outcomes through some of the tools that are available.

Q. Do you specialise in working in the auto and manufacturing sectors?

We have multiple verticals, but yes, manufacturing is, undoubtedly, one of the biggest sectors. And so is retail. Again, retail has extreme dynamism when it comes to how people need to be identified.

This is not, however, a hiring or training problem. This is both a problem of allocation and a problem of availability. And this is what workforce management helps solve. The problem becomes even more acute in a retail environment where the predictability of the number of people walking in at any point in time is so uncertain. The problem is also significantly enhanced in a BPO kind of environment.

Whether it is large logistics, warehousing companies, or airports, our customers look at their working style, and their 24/7 operations. In today's digital and social age, if a customer has one bad experience with even one employee, let's say in a retail store, they will probably vent on social media, causing a big issue for the retailer. So having the right person at the right time at the right place across industries, is what we are able to solve.

Q. What will be the top three or five categories/sectors that you will be catering to?

Manufacturing is our largest sector, followed by retail and BPOS. We also do a lot of work in logistics, warehousing, transportation, etc. Healthcare is really important for us globally. When I say healthcare, I also mean hospitals. And when I say manufacturing, I mean pharma, auto, FMCG, heavy engineering, metals, and mining, all of them are under manufacturing. And each one of them has its nuances when it comes to managing its workforce. And we are able to solve their problems in all of these sub-verticals of manufacturing.

Q. The majority of the sectors you cater to are not cloud native. How

do you get started with them?

HR technology has progressed far over the previous decade or two. There was very little adoption of lifecycle HR solutions in the Indian market in the early 2000s. There were only a few organisations, particularly the top companies, that were turning to the HR vendors. And it took time where everyone wanted to install lifecycle solutions in a full-fledged manner.

It clearly accelerated during the pandemic, and there is no doubt that it will continue to accelerate, but it has been steadily increasing over the last 5-7 years.

To get back to your point, workforce management has always been considered a secondary requirement after HRMS. This is still the case today. Traditionally, workforce management systems have been considered very rudimentary systems with organisations believing that if they could just put in a couple of biometric devices and have workers punch in and out, their job would be done. However, this does not provide any visibility or information. Over the last 14 years, we've done a great job of evangelising to this market - about how workforce management is more than simply a hardware solution, and how or what huge business implications it can have for any company.

So, in summary, the maturity of adopting workforce management solutions in the Indian markets is not yet at the level of HRMS,

but it is catching up quickly, for a couple of reasons: one, because employee costs are beginning to rise significantly, as we've all seen with the great resignation, which has primarily impacted IT organisations, but has a cascading effect across industries. Second, as employee costs soar, companies are becoming increasingly interested in being able to track staff productivity. And it is precisely where we step in.

The first and most obvious benefit of implementing a workforce management system is that it facilitates complete automation, from planning to tracking to payroll payment at the end of the month for all the employees in an organisation. It also eliminates any inadvertent payroll leakages that may occur. We've observed with customers in India and around the world that if you don't have automated workforce management systems, you could actually be losing 3% to 5% of your payroll to unwanted leakages. These are unintentional errors caused by manual and excel sheet processing. As a result, the solution pays for itself in a matter of months. That's the beauty of investing in our workforce management software.

Second, while productivity can be a little nebulous to manage at times, the impact can be significant if done correctly. The third area, where workforce management plays a very significant role, is compliance management. Whether it's the new Labour Code, the Factories Act, or the Shops and Establishment Act, businesses often struggle to know how

effectively they are complying with the law on a daily basis. Automated solutions can help to implement a stronger compliance strategy within organisations.

And last, but not least, better employee experience. HR solutions are built to drive employee experience, but they tend to focus a lot on the white collared employees only. A workforce management solution goes down to the last employee, even if he's a contract employee - from giving him access to his data on his phone to checking how much overtime he's earning to looking into his attendance - the employee feels more engaged and realises that the organisation is taking care of him. And all of this can be digitally enabled today with the tools that are possible through a workforce management solution.

Q. What is the number of blue-collar workers through your workforce management software?

About 60% is made up of blue-collar workers. And when I say blue-collar, I'm referring to jobs in manufacturing and logistics, with roughly 40% of those being white-collar jobs, such as BPOs. The value is slightly different in both places, however, the things I talked about around cost, compliance, and productivity all remain the same.

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Q. Any Covid-19 led innovation at the shop floor that also increased the adoption rate?

We introduced a facial recognition device so that employees didn t have to do a biometric fingerprint punching; instead, use facial recognition for allowing access to employees in the office. There were mechanisms devised to allow organisations to conduct contact tracing on their premises. So, if someone was found to be Covid positive, the system uses the software to track people who were close to that person in the last 12 to 24 hours.

The newer conversations right now centre around the whole hybrid workforce. To be honest, I believe that many organisations are still learning. And that's where tools and solutions like ours are actually making a significant impact. As work models keep evolving, you will need a tool that can constantly evolve with them.

Q. Speaking of your existing area of expertise, what are the additional requirements now?

We recently launched a very significant new solution area. HR service delivery is the name of the product. It is a new space in HR that is still in the evolving stage.

According to Josh Burson, one of the world's most well-known HR professionals, 41% of HR time is spent dealing with employee requests. It could be a request from an employee who comes in with an impromptu request to relocate, or trying to figure out his/her leave policy, etc. These are random requests that keep coming in all the time from employees. And the larger the organisation, the more the number of requests that keep coming in.

HR service delivery is a tool or a set of solutions that will sit on top of all process delivery solutions, whether they are HR solutions, workforce management solutions, or payroll solutions and will serve as a medium for employees to communicate with HR via a service delivery layer.

Employee queries can be addressed through a chatbot on HR service delivery as a conversation. By doing this, HR will be able to reduce a considerable amount of non-value-added work and also provide a better employee experience. Many times employee emails to the HR department get lost in translation and motion.

The HR service delivery can potentially even extend to ex-employees for queries like EPF, or a better alumni experience. Therefore, service delivery is crucial.

Furthermore, many companies are doing a variety of things, such as deploying a chatbot, a knowledge portal, or a process automation layer, but we believe that bringing all these together as an established service delivery layer with all the capabilities is an area that will grow, and we want to be first in the market when it comes to this area.

Q. Is there something from the developed market that has been introduced to the developing market, or is there a global solution in the works?

This is a solution that has proven to be quite effective in established markets. In fact, our HR service delivery solution has around 3000 or 4,000 customers worldwide. Gartner puts us as the leader in this space, but we've observed that adoption levels in India aren't quite as high as they are in the United States, but I believe that, given the size of the workforce and the rate of growth we're seeing, it'll only be a matter of time..

Q. Anyone in the country who has already begun experimenting with it?

We have a few international customers that use it in India and are extremely happy with it roughly 75 to 80 customers in India as part of the global rollout. Manufacturing, including FMCG, pharma, service delivery, and retail all are important.

Q. How many people you're looking to hire and what would be the social channels that you're looking for?

We've grown rapidly in the last few years. In fact, I think we've had roughly 20% CAGR over the last five years. We are committed to hiring at least 500 people this year, which is a good 25% increase from where we are today, and we don't see that growth slowing down anytime soon. It will only continue to grow as we, as an organisation, expand at a breakneck pace around the world. It will mostly be in technology, technical roles, R&D, and engineering functions.

By Bruhadeeswaran R and Moumita Bhattacharjee

📷 SNAPSHOT

Registered Name:	Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG) is an American MNC with dual headquarters in Lowell, Massachusetts, and Weston, Florida
Year of Incorporation:	UKG was founded in April 2020 as a result of the merger of Ultimate Software and Kronos Incorporated
Number of Employees:	14600+ global, 2200 in India
Founders:	Mark S. Ain (Kronos founder) 1977
Key Executives:	Aron Ain (CEO, chairman), Christopher Todd (President), Hugo Sarrazin (Chief Product and Technology officer). India's key leadership includes Sumeet Doshi (Country Manager), Ashok Saxena (VP Engineering) & Nitin Wadhwa (Director HR)
Business Line:	UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group) is a global leader in HR and Workforce Management solutions.
Hiring Pipeline:	500 people have joined in the current UKG fiscal, and another 500 are expected to be added in the rest of the year
Workforce Growth:	19% CAGR for India over last 5 years
Workforce Pie:	1200 Eng & Product, 200+ Cloud, 400 Implementation & Support, 100+ Global Finance Services, 200 Enabling functions (including IT, HR & Sales/Marketing, Internal Audit, Legal etc.)
Key HR Factors:	Industry Leading employee health benefits, Special 4 weeks COVID leave, Employee Relief fund, and making every U Krewer a part of our long-term growth via Restricted Stock Units are a few to mention.
Key Investors:	Private equity firm Hellman & Friedman, who was the controlling shareholder of both Ultimate and Kronos, is the controlling shareholder of UKG. The Blackstone Group, which also owned stakes in both previous companies, is the largest minority investor with a 20 25 percent stake. Other minority investors include GIC, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, and JMI Equity